

Université de Montréal

**The Path of the Logos:
The relevance of the practice of Bible study in an American prison**

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Résumé

Pour les Chrétiens, une analyse complète de la pratique de l'étude biblique dans le contexte carcéral peut approfondir la compréhension de ce qui constitue un ministère efficace. Pour les non-Chrétiens, une telle étude peut augmenter la compréhension des relations complexes entre la foi, la prison et la croissance personnelle aux États-Unis. Beaucoup de Chrétiens américains croient que l'étude biblique est une pratique émancipatrice qui peut aider ceux qui cherchent à résoudre l'énorme problématique carcérale aux États-Unis. Les participants aux études bibliques en milieu carcéral (tant comme enseignants qu'élèves) cherchent des manières de montrer que la lumière de Dieu continue de briller même dans des endroits parmi les plus sombres de la Terre comme les prisons. La croyance en cette perspective théologique a conduit de nombreux Chrétiens (bénévoles ou aumôniers) à combattre la problématique de l'incarcération de masse en établissant des pratiques religieuses dans les prisons. Le système carcéral américain traite la religion non seulement comme un droit à préserver mais aussi comme l'un des programmes qui peuvent aider à réhabiliter les prisonniers avant leur retour dans la société. La *Garden State Youth Correctional Facility* (GSYCF) héberge près de 1200 jeunes hommes de 17 à 27 ans. Comme la plupart des prisons américaines, la GSYCF doit permettre les pratiques religieuses auprès des prisonniers. À travers la praxéologie pastorale, cette recherche observe la pratique et les effets de l'étude biblique sur les vies de plusieurs praticiens incarcérés. Cette recherche traite spécifiquement d'une étude biblique, la *Logos Bible Study* (LBS) qui se distingue des autres programmes par son emphase sur l'étude contemplative des Écritures Saintes et la promotion d'une autoréflexion critique. Après l'analyse d'entretiens et sondages effectués sur un groupe de participants incarcérés de la LBS, cette étude propose des méthodes pour créer un terreau de transformation positive dans un territoire d'incarcération. Ces méthodes mènent à l'*anakainosis-desmios*, un état de renouveau spirituel possible uniquement à l'intérieur de la prison qui promeut la création et l'expression d'attitudes émancipatoires et hospitalières au sein d'une culture carcérale oppressive et hostile.

Mots-clés : Étude biblique en prison, Aumônier, Praxéologie pastorale, Perspectives transformées, Anakainosis, Panopticon, Religion en prison, Renouvellement spirituel, Ministère en prison

Abstract

For Christians, a thorough study of the practice of Bible Study in the prison context can help deepen understandings of what constitutes effective ministry. For people outside of the Christian faith, a study of this practice could increase understandings about the complex relationships between faith, prison and personal growth in America. Many American Christians believe that Bible study is an emancipative practice that can help those forces seeking to resolve America's enormous incarceration problem. Participants in penitentiary bible study (teachers and students) seek ways of showing that the light of God continues to shine even in the darkest places on earth like prisons. Belief in this theological perspective has led many Christians (as volunteers or as chaplains) to fight against the problem of mass incarceration by establishing religious practices in prisons. The American prison system sees religion not only as a right to be preserved but also as one of the programs that help rehabilitate the prisoner before his or her return to society. Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (GSYCF) houses about 1200 young men between the ages of 17 and 27. Like most American prisons, GSYCF is required to offer opportunities for religious practice to prisoners. Through the approach of Pastoral Praxeology, this research observes the practice and the effects of Bible study on the lives of several incarcerated practitioners. The particular Bible study practice that this research project engages is the Logos Bible Study (LBS) which is distinguished from other programs by its focus on the prayerful study of the Holy Scriptures and the promotion of critical self-reflection over time. After analyzing the interviews and surveys of a group of incarcerated participants in LBS, this study has found methods for creating a terrain of positive transformation within a territory of incarceration. These methods lead to *Anakainosis-Desmios*—a state of spiritual renewal only possible within prison that promotes the creation and expression of emancipatory and hospitable attitudes within an oppressive and hostile prison culture.

Keywords: Bible study in prison, Chaplain, Pastoral praxeology, Transformed perspectives, Anakainosis, Panopticon, Religion in prison, Spiritual renewal, Prison Ministry

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To all those whose minds have been freed from a prison...

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1. The socio-historical context of prison ministry and the Logos Bible Study

1.1. My testimony: 20 years of prison chaplaincy

On an evening when I should have taken off from my duties as a prison chaplain in order to focus on finishing this dissertation, I decided to go into the prison where I was stationed to lead a Bible study because I was reminded that it would be the last night that a particular resident would be at the prison before release. Allan I will call him. He was an immigrant from the Ivory Coast who was finishing a three-year sentence for selling illegal drugs and having a gun. He was my chapel clerk and a very intelligent man. He was the only person with whom I could speak French (the church I serve on the street is French-speaking) and he showed me through various programs that he was of college-level intelligence, able to speak and write French and English fluently. When he did his crime, he was high on drugs, an addiction to which he was doubtlessly led by a father who abandoned him and a mother who despite her ability to emigrate to the United States, neglected him and left him to navigate the streets of New York on his own.

During these last three years, he showed me how much we were alike. Two bilingual men of African descent who had the experience of living in foreign countries and were friendly and service minded. However, the big difference between us: both of my parents were home and even though I would have liked more of their attention, I had no doubt that they loved me. Allan on the other hand was swept away by the many social forces that lead so many people to prison—forces that need to be changed. Allan appreciated my presence in his life within a Prison that was designed to break his spirit and he appreciated that in the midst of

his experiences of dehumanization and violence in the streets and in prison, I stood as someone who cared about his life. The next morning after the Bible study, the agents of the United States' Immigration and Customs Enforcement were scheduled to come and take him. Given the current anti-immigrant climate of the U.S. Administration, it is highly likely that he will be deported to a country where he did not spend most of his life. He cried at the end of the Bible study that evening. Allan cried as he thanked me for being more than a brother to him. He saw me as a rare father figure in his life and often gently called me "papa".

What stuns me more than his tears of appreciation and sorrow for our friendship from which he was about to separate, is the fact that he was about to be set free from prison...but was sad about it.

What this tells me, is that while people (including myself) may continue to criticize America's system of mass incarceration, there are people trapped in this system who need sincere people to care for them while they spend time within it. From what I could tell, Allan had never met an African American man like me who sincerely wanted the best for him and was willing to teach him, to learn from him and to advocate for him. I cannot ignore the fact that our nourishing relationship would not have occurred outside of prison. Nevertheless, I have doubted the effectiveness of my ministry many times, especially when I hear from or read about critics of the American prison system who see me and other chaplains simply as instruments of control and correction for a system that needs reform. Criticisms of prisons and prison staff come in many forms from scholarly books and articles, to Hip Hop songs and spoken word poetry.

*“[I’m] in a state of war, [and] verbalizing the peace,
[but] my hostility is toward clerics of the beast”*

— Brother J of the X-Clan¹

In the American Hip Hop community, if someone is in the “belly of the beast” that person is incarcerated in one of America’s prisons. This terminology was also used in the book *In the Belly of the Beast* written by Jack Henry Abbott and released in 1981, which described horrible prison conditions in the belly of the American “beast” or, in other words, the American Criminal Justice System and the American Prison System which devour a large percentage of its citizens. The book received critical acclaim by the New York Times² and brought the term firmly into American culture. 10 years later, a group of men serving sentences of 25 years to life at East Jersey (formerly Rahway) Prison in New Jersey released a rap song called “Belly of the Beast” where they used and solidified this terminology in Hip Hop culture.³ As a former rapper, I am very aware of this terminology and I recognized its use by Brother J of the rap group X-Clan in the above quote. After serving many years in prison chaplaincy, Brother J’s quote touched my heart since he is referring to those “clerics” or administrative collaborators who uphold and defend the “beast” or political system that uses its powers of oppression, coercion and surveillance disproportionately upon the American poor—especially people of color. I heard Brother J’s quote and asked myself the following question: as a prison chaplain, am I a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ or am I simply an administrative agent of the “beast?” This research, may offer a partial answer to that question

¹ Brother J, “Weapon X” X-Clan. *Return from Mecca* (2007)

² Terrence Des Pres, “A Child of the State,” *New York Times*, July 19, 1981.

³ Lifers Group, “The Belly of the Beast,” Hollywood BASIC Records (1991).

while trying to discern if one particular religious practice that I helped initiate in a prison was an effective ministry or simply another prison program designed to control and correct the incarcerated.

This dissertation studies the Logos Bible Study (LBS) that was started by Jericho Ministries in 2002 at the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (GSYCF or Garden State) within the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC). The first chapter of this research will situate the Logos Bible Study not only within my interests as a prison chaplain but also within the larger context of prison ministry in the American era of mass incarceration. My personal interest in prison ministry started during an internship through the Field Education Department of the Master's of Divinity Program at Princeton Theological Seminary. The internship was at the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. In Chapter 2, I explain in detail how this internship brought me into a relationship with Jericho Ministries, Inc.—the organization that brought the religious practice of the Logos Bible Study to GSYCF. During that internship I discovered a passion for bringing the Gospel message to the incarcerated—especially after I found out that a large percentage of young men in New Jersey prisons were from Camden, the city of my childhood. This dynamic exists because Camden has been categorized several times over the last 20 years as one of the poorest and most dangerous cities in the United States.⁴ After eight years as a volunteer, Garden State Youth Correctional Facility hired me full-time as a Protestant Chaplain. After about seven years of service, I was

⁴ <http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2014/02/10/camdens-crime-rate-makes-city-most-dangerous-in-the-country>
Web. 01 January 2018.

promoted to Supervisor Chaplain and I have spent the last six years coordinating and supervising not only Protestant Christian activities, but also all faith practices at GSYCF.

As a chaplain for the New Jersey Department of Corrections, I received trainings about the history of chaplaincy, prison administration, prison security and about conflict resolution (in particular, victim-offender mediation). I have participated in dozens of trainings over the years and I believe that there have been a few books written by prison chaplains that summarize well what I have learned through classroom instruction and field experience. These books summarize well the existing literature on prison chaplaincy in America with their descriptions of prison culture and the various roles that a chaplain must assume within it. I will briefly introduce several of these books here since they will serve as reference points throughout this dissertation that enunciate the chaplaincy perspectives I will evaluate through this research project.

The first book that gives a good description of the experience of the chaplain and that will serve as one of the primary reference points of this research is *Prison Ministry* by Lennie Spitale. Lennie Spitale was a prison resident who, after being released as a citizen returning to society, decided to serve society by getting the instruction he needed in order to re-enter the American prison industrial complex as a Protestant chaplain.⁵ When I first read his book I was very impressed by the way he was able to describe in great detail prison culture without getting too graphic with those details. He describes the different dynamics of the incarcerated environment with precision and uses that precision to suggest ways that a person who feels

⁵ Lennie Spitale, *Prison Ministry: Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), ix.

called to prison ministry (mainly Protestant prison ministry) could develop an effective ministry. Even though his point of view is arguably limited to the evangelical perspective of American Protestantism, his description of the multi-layered dynamics of prison life, on temporal, spatial, material and interpersonal levels is so detailed that an outside volunteer from any faith tradition could find in his book helpful hints to start a faith practice in prison.

The second book to which I will refer often in the course of this research is called *Prison Ministry: Hope Behind the Wall*, by Dennis Pierce. Dennis Pierce served as a Catholic chaplain in Joliet Correctional Center in Chicago. While Spitale's book had a section on "how to start a prison ministry" and was arguably directed toward prison ministry volunteers, Pierce wrote his book more so to offer prison administrators tools that could enhance their rehabilitation programs. Pierce's book emphasizes the psychological states of the incarcerated, which result from their hostile environment. He describes well the ubiquitous prisoner practice of coping and demonstrates an understanding of the various forms that coping can take. Even though psychology is not his specific field of expertise, he makes a strong argument that prison chaplains must include in their breadth of knowledge human psychology and penology in order to make their spiritual ministries and teachings effective. Even though I found the book to be lacking coherence in certain sections, overall I recognize it as an important reference point for the relational and emotional dimensions of prison life.⁶

⁶ Other researchers in prison education like Tanya Erzen have recognized this as well (see Chapter 6 of this research).

The next reference point is the book, *Church of the Second Chance: A Faith-based Approach to Prison Reform*, by Jens Soering.⁷ Among all the writers that I have read not only for this research but in my life, Jens Soering is unique because, as of the completion of this dissertation he was incarcerated, serving two consecutive life sentences for the murder of a retired couple in Virginia. Born in Thailand to German diplomats, he was Buddhist until he converted to Roman Catholicism during his incarceration!⁸ Since his conversion he has written six books about religion and religious practices as means of changing prison culture and of prison reform. In addition to Catholic networks of support, he has also gotten literary support from Lantern Books and Orbis Books publishers who were quite impressed by the amount of research he has been able to do while incarcerated.⁹ I found Soering's theological perspectives as an incarcerated person to be very important since they demonstrate that a prison resident is capable offering profound thoughts on the transformation of prison culture. Soering is not a professor or teacher of biblical theology or penology, nevertheless, he offers impressive insights on how certain accounts in the Bible can be used as inspiration for prison reform. As a chaplain I would offer his book to those Christians who are trying to find Scriptures that could encourage their churches to get involved with criminal justice reform.

Another impressive work that I believe resonates with my experiences, as a prison chaplain, is *The Work of the Chaplain* by Naomi K. Paget and Janet R. McCormack. Naomi

⁷ Soering case: http://www.richmond.com/news/local/crime/ex-girlfriend-jens-soering-killed-her-parents-because-mom-had/article_5b0a3614-33fa-5304-af0c-381fe5640a61.html

⁸ Jens Soering, *The Convict Christ: What the Gospel Says About Criminal Justice*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books (2006), introduction.

⁹ Nathan Heller, "Blood Ties," *The New Yorker Magazine*, November 9, 2015.

Paget is a chaplain affiliated with American Southern Baptists who specializes in crisis chaplaincy and psycho-trauma intervention. She has served as a crisis interventionist for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and other disaster relief organizations. Janet McCormack is a Southern Baptist who has served as a U.S. Air Force Chaplain, as director of a Chaplaincy and Counseling Training Center and as an assistant professor of chaplaincy and pastoral counseling at Denver Seminary.¹⁰ Their book addresses the following: social and theological foundations of prison chaplaincy; overall ministry tasks and competencies for chaplains; the specific dynamics chaplaincy work in the military, in prisons, in health-care institutions, in places of employment, in the world of first-responders, on college campuses, on sports teams; and chaplains as bridges between a church and the institutions (e.g. nursing homes) of its surrounding community. Even though their book seems to be mainly rooted in their personal experience and training and does not offer footnotes or endnotes in support of their claims, the book does offer an extensive bibliography and insightful information about chaplains that I, as a chaplain, recognize as an accurate account of the responsibilities and rewards of chaplaincy—especially prison chaplaincy.

One final work that represents well the perspectives and priorities of chaplains is *Chaplains to the Imprisoned: Sharing Life with the Incarcerated* by Richard Denis Shaw. Shaw is an ordained Roman Catholic priest who served as a prison chaplain for over 20 years. What makes his book important to this research is that he wrote it as someone who got a PhD in criminal justice—not theology. His book did a survey of prison chaplains and analyzed

¹⁰ Naomi K. Paget and Janet R. McCormack, *The Work of the Chaplain*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2006), synopsis.

their responses from criminological as well as theological perspectives. His book gives some strong critiques of prison chaplaincy as well as demonstrates the importance of this field. While Shaw and the other authors that I have highlighted here are not all of the authors on prison chaplaincy that I have consulted, they represent very well those theological and penological dimensions of prison ministry that have guided me to choose the practice of prison Bible study as the subject of this dissertation. Also, these authors have shown me that they care about the incarcerated and about establishing human rights and dignity in prisons in ways that are similar to my own. By referencing them repeatedly in this research I am referencing those caring attitudes, learning experiences and thoughtful actions that have framed much of the practical theology of prison ministry in which I have operated for two decades.

1.2. Modern criticisms of prison ministry in light of the American culture of mass incarceration

“For many faith-based ministries, the emphasis on the individual rather than the community justifies mass incarceration. This results in charity instead of justice. Charity is episodic; justice is ongoing. The one changes individuals, the other societies.”¹¹

This is a quote from Tanya Erzen’s book *God in Captivity: The Rise of Faith-based Prison Ministries in the Age of Mass Incarceration*—a quote that summarizes the criticisms of prison ministry during the development of America’s system of mass incarceration. Erzen is a scholar whose work focuses on American religion with particular interests in ethnography, gender and sexuality studies, and American conservatism. She has taught college courses for

¹¹ Tanya Erzen. *God in Captivity: The Rise of Faith-Based Prison Ministries in the Age of Mass Incarceration* (Beacon Press), 125-126. Kindle Edition.

the incarcerated and tries to educate the public about educational access and incarceration through her role as director of an organization that provides college classes to women in prison within the State of Washington.¹² She has used her access to prisons and prison chapels to observe faith-based programs directed by evangelical Christians that seem to focus on individual salvation instead of collective justice. She gives a strong argument for this as she researches the reasons for which the presence of fundamentalist Christian ministries seems to be growing during America's era of mass incarceration. In this section I will briefly review the social context of mass incarceration in America and its important dimensions that give rise to criticisms of religious practices like prison Bible study—the focus of this research.

1.2.1. The rise of mass incarceration in American history

The phenomenon of mass incarceration in America has been well documented. The United States of America is internationally known as the country with the highest rate of incarceration on planet Earth.¹³ Many scholars and journalists have published the information that the rate of incarceration in the United States has grown at an alarming rate in recent history. Bruce Western, a sociologist who has been recognized as one of the leading academic experts on incarceration, wrote in his award-winning book *Punishment and Inequality in America*, that between 1925 and 1975 there were only 100 out 100,000 (about 0.1% of the population) people in prison, but between 1975 and 2003 the rate of imprisonment grew

¹² TanyaErzen.com, June 28, 2018.

¹³ Jenifer Warren, "One in 100: Behind Bars in America," The Public Safety Performance Project of Pew Charitable Trusts, Pew Center on the States (2008), 5.

rapidly to 0.7%.¹⁴ According to 2008 report of the Public Safety Project of the Pew Charitable Trusts, incarceration rates worsened between 1987 and 2007 when the prison population tripled.¹⁵ In addition, in 2008 the number of adults under the surveillance (incarceration or parole supervision) of the U.S. criminal justice system increased to 2.3 million people.¹⁶ In 2018, the number of people incarcerated is more than 2 million.¹⁷

Michelle Alexander is a legal scholar, who has won quite a few accolades for her book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, and is credited with being someone who has greatly helped to bring mass incarceration to the forefront of American consciousness.¹⁸ Alexander shares the perspective of many scholars and activists on America's system of incarceration when she writes in her book that, "the stark and sobering reality is that, for reasons largely unrelated to actual crime trends, the American penal system has emerged as a system of social control unparalleled in world history."¹⁹ Sociologists have not found any significant correlation between increased incarceration and rates of criminality.²⁰ On the other hand, various studies show that the causes of criminality and recidivism can be traced to experiences of incarceration. Detainees who are caught up in the

¹⁴ Bruce Western, *Punishment and Inequality in America*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation 2006), 12, 13. This rate of incarceration includes county jails and state prisons.

¹⁵ Warren, 5.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Peter Wagner and Wendy Sawyer, "Mass Incarceration: the Whole Pie 2018," The Prison Policy Initiative. [Web](#). 15 June 2018.

¹⁸ New Jim Crow website, <http://newjimcrow.com/about-the-author> . Web. 15 June 2018.

¹⁹ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, (New York: New Press 2010), 8.

²⁰ Western, 168-186.

American culture of incarceration must deal with its negative impacts on employment and on family life—negative impacts that can lead to crime.²¹ These studies describe the rise of an American phenomenon that is unique in the world: the phenomenon of mass incarceration.

Even though this dissertation is not a sociological or penological treatise on American policies of incarceration, Michel Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, can offer helpful insights on those political forces that surround prison ministry. Foucault's book has been acknowledged as a philosophical "tour de force" that traces the logic of penal policies in Europe and the United States.²² Foucault describes the political path of Western prison systems from corporal punishment to psychological classification and correction.²³ Foucault acknowledges (along with other penal historians mentioned above) that governing authorities were pushed in the 1700s and 1800s toward more humane forms of punishment. This search for new forms of retribution led to the creation of tools of correction and control that included custodial timetables, of buildings and devices designed for continuous surveillance and of disciplinary programs.²⁴ Foucault saw the prison similar to other societal institutions that seek to control the masses by developing a spectrum of normalized behaviors that can keep the authorities aware of and in control of the deviants—the poor more likely than the rich.²⁵ Foucault would see America's system of mass incarceration as the result of the increasing normalization of unjust criminal justice policies that

²¹ Ibid., 187-188

²² David J. Rothman, "Society and Its Prisons," *The New York Times*, 19 February 1978.

²³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1977).

²⁴ Ibid., Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.

²⁵ Ibid., 293-308.

disproportionately incarcerate the poor and/or people of color—and prison ministries are at best ignorant of this or at worst, complicit in it. While Foucault’s book on the “Birth of the Prison,” is an important work, it has been noted that his analysis overgeneralizes the operations of prisons, seeing them all as static and unchanging in their methods and policies of discipline over time.²⁶ In my experience as a prison chaplain I have seen operations vary from prison to prison, in part due to personnel, in part due to the physical logistics of the facility. This dissertation enters into detail about a religious practice at a particular prison. Consequently, while Foucault’s perspectives on the development of prison policies over time help people to recognize those penal philosophies at work in the environment surrounding a religious practice, his points of view fall short of offering insights into the unique dynamics at work in particular religious practices in particular prisons.

1.2.2. Prison ministry as a Christian response to mass incarceration

The American phenomenon of mass incarceration has serious implications for American neighborhoods and religious communities because the incarcerated come out of and return to them. Many American Christians believe that Bible study and other prison ministries offer emancipative practices that can help resolve America’s enormous incarceration problem.²⁷ Belief in this theological perspective has led many Christians (as volunteers or as chaplains) to fight against the problem of mass incarceration by establishing religious practices in prisons. These people base their prison ministries on certain biblical texts that will be discussed at length in Chapter 4 of this research. For example, as mentioned earlier, many

²⁶ Rothman, “Society and Its Prisons.”

²⁷ Spitale, 199-200, 226-240.

volunteers and chaplains have ministries inspired by what Jesus said in Matthew 25:36, “when I was in prison, you visited me.” In Acts 16:25-40 Paul and Silas pray, sing hymns and preach the word of God despite their tortured imprisonment and consequently, the prisoners and the jailer received the comfort and liberation of the Good News. Authors like Lennie Spitale promote this perspective. According to him, the prison can easily symbolize sin and the consequences of sin. Bible study represents the grace of God and the power of Christ to overcome the consequences of sin and reconcile human beings with God, with their families, with their communities and with themselves.²⁸ Participants in penitentiary bible study (teachers and students) seek ways of showing that the light of God continues to shine even in the darkest places on Earth, which include prisons.

As the American system of mass incarceration has developed and as the general awareness of the dehumanizing conditions of prisons has grown through history, these dynamics have not deterred or prevented people who believe in the emancipative power of Bible study from coming in to prisons to serve prisoners. This is not only due to the persistence of religious people, it is also due to the fact that in the United States, the right to practice religion was established by the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States—placing the burden of assuring the practice of religion by prisoners on the prison administrations of individual states and of the federal government.²⁹ Religious freedom is so highly respected that even in prisons where prisoners have most of their rights taken away, the

²⁸ Ibid., 39.

²⁹ “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” (First Amendment, U.S. Constitution)

right to religious practice is maintained and even defended. The American prison system sees religion not only as a right to be preserved but also as one of the programs that help rehabilitate the prisoner before his or her return to society.³⁰ There are many who scrutinize prison ministry on various levels since it seems that religious volunteers have greater access to the system than those activists who would reform the prison system, and the volunteers do not seem to be taking full advantage of such access to change American prison policy. I am certainly aware of such criticisms and I will summarize here the major ones to which I must regularly respond while I do the work of prison chaplaincy in order to complete the picture of the social context in which prison ministry occurs.

1.2.3. Race, mass incarceration and prison ministry

“More African American men are under correctional control today—in prison or jail, on probation or parole than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War began.”³¹

As of 2018, in the State of New Jersey 62% of people under the custody of the Department of Corrections were African American men.³² Everyday, during the execution of my duties at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility, I am faced with the reality that most of the inmates are African American like me. Everyday, I see the results of the social reality that

³⁰ New Jersey Administrative Code (NJAC) 10A: 17-5.1 “Freedom of religious affiliation and voluntary worship.”

³¹ Michelle Alexander. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Kindle Locations 2355-2356. Kindle Edition.

³² “Offenders in New Jersey Correctional Institutions on January 2, 2018 by Race/Ethnic Identification,” New Jersey Department of Corrections.
https://www.nj.gov/corrections/pdf/offender_statistics/2018/By%20Race%20Ethnicity%202018.pdf . Web. 15 June 2018.

is depicted so well by Michelle Alexander in her above quote. It is this aspect of the reality of working in the NJ Department of Corrections that sometimes places my mind in the dilemma that I described at the beginning of Chapter 1 of this research: is my job helping incarcerated men or is it helping the system that incarcerated them? As an African American man who serves mainly African American incarcerated men, I take this aspect of prison ministry very seriously.

The dynamic of an arguably racially biased criminal justice system is for me exacerbated by the fact that it is commonly known that there are disproportionate numbers of African Americans who are criminally victimized by other African Americans.³³ There was a young Black man to whom I gave a job as chapel clerk in my office at the prison and who opened up his heart and mind to me. He shared with me the details of his crime in the hopes of better understanding his actions and to increase his sympathy for the victim through our conversation. His crime involved holding a woman against her will at gun point. It troubled my heart because my mother was held against her will and robbed at gun point in my former high school in Camden, NJ. The African American perpetrator of the crime against her decided to go to trial and was freed due to a lack of evidence. My mother went on to early retirement from her career as a teacher and years of psychotherapy to address the trauma of the event. I believe that the works of Michelle Alexander and other critics of the criminal justice system are very important for the process of much needed reforms in our criminal justice

³³ Corinne Ramey, "New Jersey Requires Racial Impact Statements for Crime Law Changes," Wall Street Journal, 16 January 2018.

system. However, while Alexander properly notes that incarceration can lead to criminality,³⁴ the social dynamic of Black on Black crime and its effects lead to various reactions. Instead of seeking to contribute to the punishment of the young man who committed a crime similar to the one that changed my mother's life, I sought to include him in religious practices that would help him come to a point of sympathy for the victim, reconciliation with his home community, with himself and with God. Perhaps it would be logical if I were to hope that this young man would receive the punishment that I felt was deserved by the man who attacked my mother. However, I chose to maintain the pastoral role of chaplain over my feelings and offer him the spiritual care that Paget and McCormack state all chaplains are have the responsibility to offer.³⁵ Instead of exacting some type of revenge on the young man who became our chapel clerk, I was able to use my position to stop the cycle of Black on Black aggression in some small way.

I must also take note that the factor of race is also at work within prison culture as it is at work in the policies that maintain the prison system. Richard Shaw acknowledges that "racism mixed with religion exists within prisons, and must be dealt with by chaplains."³⁶ I have dealt with detainees who are White supremacists who use the federally recognized religion of Odinism to express and support their racist views. I also have to be wary of staff who would make jokes, gestures or statements that are grounded in prejudice. When faced with such situations I do not avoid or ignore them, rather I face them because my

³⁴ Western, 114.

³⁵ Paget and McCormack, *The Work of the Chaplain*, 18-20.

³⁶ Richard Shaw, *Chaplains to the Imprisoned: Sharing Life with the Incarcerated* (New York: The Hayworth Press, 1995), 88.

responsibilities as a chaplain include compassionate conversations with prison residents and staff, one person or situation at a time.³⁷ I suppose that my education, my training and most importantly my faith are what enable me to take on such risky tasks regularly. Nevertheless, critics of prison ministry would say that dealing with people on an individual or case-by-case basis is not enough to change systemic racism.³⁸ I would agree and add that effective chaplains seek and find points of commonality and are sensitive to diversity in order to encourage the creation of community and hopefully the transformation of the environment.³⁹ I see that one common point among all the incarcerated men with whom I work is a state of spiritual and economic poverty. While some would see this as an opportunity for exploitation, I see it as an opportunity for empowerment and enlightenment through religious practice.⁴⁰

1.2.4. Poverty, mass incarceration and prison ministry

Bruce Western's book *Punishment and Inequality in America* demonstrates very well that incarceration is a consequence (and a cause) of poverty along with a lack of education.⁴¹ The critics of prison ministry could say that as long as faith-based organizations are not addressing the causes and consequences of poverty that push people into the prison system, then the prison ministries of these organizations will always be lacking effectiveness.⁴² Laura

³⁷ Pierce in his book *Prison Ministry* focuses on compassionate care of prison residents while Paget and McCormack recognize that need for care of prison staff as well, *The Work of the Chaplain*, 65-67.

³⁸ Tanya Erzen, *God in Captivity*, 178.

³⁹ Paget and McCormack, 10-11.

⁴⁰ Spitale, 195-201.

⁴¹ Western, 35-43, 109-114.

⁴² Laura Magnani, Harmon L. Wray, *Beyond Prisons: A New Interfaith Paradigm for Our Failed Prison System* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 37-42.

Magnani and Harmon Wray, criminal justice activists wrote their book *Beyond Prisons* in an effort to educate faith-based groups on the issues that need to be addressed in order to change the American prison system. They offer that any religious group that is interested in engaging the prison system will need to engage and understand the social dynamic of poverty. Shaw recognized in his survey of chaplains that many of them are frustrated with their limited ability and with society's limited will to help those detainees who are released to poor conditions that could push them back into the prison industrial complex.⁴³

I readily tell the residents that poverty is an enormous challenge for their lives inside and outside of prison. What solidifies my relationships over time with the men at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility is that I show my concern and my willingness to walk with them as they face such a challenge. I also train the religious volunteers that come to our prison to use their church networks to help those men with whom they have established relationships during religious practice. As will be shown in Chapters 2 and 3, the Logos Bible Study offered by Jericho Ministries takes into account this reality of many of the residents. When Jericho first started its ministries at GSYCF, they proclaimed interest in and sought volunteer support for aftercare or support networks for returning citizens. This issue of poverty leads to the question of whether the chaplain is involved in the prison system as a worker for the restoration of detainees into society or as a tool of retribution by society.

⁴³ Shaw, 108.

1.2.5. The prison chaplain as an agent of restorative or retributive justice

In his book, *The Church of the Second Chance*, Jens Soering gives a good summary of the religious roots of retributive justice that are at work in the prison system. He explains that the “satisfaction theory” of atonement states that Jesus’ sacrifice of his life satisfied the debt of sin that humanity had toward God—a theory that started with Saint Anselm and was taken up by the Protestant Reformation as “penal substitution” theory where the guilt and punishment of humanity was imposed on Christ and his righteousness was imputed to us. According to Soering, this perspective greatly influenced the way Western criminal justice systems developed.⁴⁴ Such a viewpoint strongly supports the idea of retributive justice, the idea that a person who harms another person must pay a debt to the victim and to society—the offender must be punished. As noted earlier, Foucault would see prison chaplains as simply part of the system of retribution that is meant to discipline and control the incarcerated until their debt to society is paid.

In 20th century America, the idea of restorative justice emerged as an alternative to retributive justice. Restorative justice is an idea inspired by Native Americans that does not focus on how an offender can be punished but rather on how the harm can be healed.⁴⁵ Restorative justice focuses on healing relationships and communities of the harm that has been done to them. As part of my training for prison chaplaincy, I became certified in Victim-Offender Mediation, a process that seeks to help the offender to understand the pain of the

⁴⁴ Soering, 11.

⁴⁵ Magnani and Wray, 164.

victim and for the victim to have an opportunity to express his or her pain and try to understand the perspective of the offender. While this process has been helpful in my prison work (I have taught and supervised a program at Garden State called “Focus on the Victim”⁴⁶), restorative justice does have its challenges. In order for restorative justice to work, a common value base must be established among the people involved.⁴⁷ All parties—the victim, the offender and the surrounding community—must all have similar understandings of the importance of the process. If not, transformative healing cannot occur. I have recognized this difficulty in my chaplaincy work. For example, one participant in a Focus on the Victim (FOV) class that I was facilitating had difficulty understanding why he could not simply send to his victim the apology letter that he had written to her. I had to explain to him that by imposing his unsolicited letter upon her was in fact re-victimizing her. She must have the freedom to choose to accept his letter and she could make that choice if she would contact the Office of Victim Services of the New Jersey Department of Corrections where they would inform her that the letter was on file there, available for her to read. Oftentimes however, victims are not interested in learning about restorative justice programs like FOV unless they are taught about its significance.

While I certainly agreed with those proponents of restorative justice who believe that I should always use it in my work as a chaplain, I thought it important to add to restorative justice’s long term goals of structural change, another form for justice work from Jens Soering that I could use to satisfy the short-term day-to-day needs of people in the prison. This form

⁴⁶ The Focus On The Victim Program helps prison residents understand and be sensitive to the feelings of victims of crime.

⁴⁷ Magnani and Wray, 167.

of justice work is rooted in the interpretation of Jesus' atonement sacrifice on the cross as the expression of "redemptive solidarity."⁴⁸ For Soering, redemptive solidarity is not concerned about Jesus paying some debt that humanity cannot pay in retribution, but rather Jesus' love for humanity led him to identify with the hurtful destiny of sinful humanity. Jesus was willing to accompany humans in their suffering in order to fortify his relationship with them and lead them to a path of regeneration and reconciliation. Accompanying people in their suffering is part of the call of chaplaincy. The work of many authors and researchers of prison chaplaincy seem to confirm this. All of the chaplains cited above (and who will be referenced at other points in this work)—Spitale, Shaw, Pierce, Paget and MacCormack—all write about chaplains having the responsibility to see the prison residents in the cells where they live and to offer pastoral counseling in addition to the religious services in the chapel. As will be noted in Chapters 6 and 7 of this research, these authors and others talk about the importance of chaplains finding compassionate ways inside and outside of religious practices to care for the incarcerated. In the 50-state survey of prison chaplains that was released by the Pew Charitable Trusts in 2012, chaplains around the United States considered the religious practices that they administer to be the most important part of their jobs.⁴⁹ In the open-ended portion of the survey many comments from the chaplains demonstrated a belief that if religious practices engage the lives of inmates then they will be empowered to transform their perspectives on their lives in various ways.⁵⁰ I am confident that my adoption of this belief

⁴⁸ Soering, 11-12.

⁴⁹ Stephanie C. Boddie and Cary Funk, "Religion in Prisons: A 50-State Survey of Prison Chaplains," Pew Research Center, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 37.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 66.

has allowed me to overcome many personal and social obstacles in order to continue the work of prison chaplaincy. As I do this work, I certainly think of my race and the poverty of the city of my childhood. The work of chaplaincy has also caused me to reflect on those times when I was victimized by crime—times when I was not focused on race or class but focused on the trauma and how to heal it. While I, along with other concerned American citizens, address the large racist and classist forms of oppression in American society, we must also be concerned about the emotional pain and spiritual confusion that individuals experience in their daily lives. This perspective is expressed by Hille Haker in her article, “Restoring Human Rights and Dignity in Prisons: The Case of U.S. Mass Incarceration”:

“Prison chaplaincy is not only the work of advocacy for justice...it must also be conceived as the concrete site of recognition: in responding to the need to be recognized, the experience of humiliation, degradation and lawlessness that echoes so many narratives of prisoners may be countered by experiences of respect, affirmation, and the right to have rights. [This type of ministry] may not transform the systemic injustices but may well pave the way for a reform that not only includes political reforms but also the training and ongoing education of prison workers and the concrete interactions with prisoners on all levels—through these, they will, at a minimum, contribute to the “re-humanization” of those who have been dehumanized, contribute to the re-socialization of those who have been excluded from society, and they will contribute to the restoration of dignity for those who have been denied the right to live a life in dignity...”⁵¹

By walking with the incarcerated, I have been taught and have taught others how we humans can heal the hurt we have caused or received. The Logos Bible Study, the subject of

⁵¹ Hille Haker, “Restoring Human Rights and Dignity in Prisons: The Case of US Mass Incarceration,” *For Justice and Mercy: International Reflections on Prison Chaplaincy*, Ryan van Ejik, Gerard Loman and Theo W.A. de Wit, eds (Netherlands: Wolf Publishers, 2016), 228.

this research, may be one of those religious practices that can bring about such healing in prison on personal and even structural levels.

1.3. Research outline: measuring the relevancy of prison Bible study through Pastoral Praxeology

1.3.1. Chapter overview

Pastoral Praxeology is the method of research from Practical Theology that will be used in this dissertation. It is a hermeneutical approach for studying Christian practices and helping practitioners to become more aware of the reasons and responsibilities for the practice by taking the researcher through five phases. These phases are: observation of the practice; examination of the practice's strengths and weaknesses; theological interpretation of the practice; intervention for improvement of the practice; and projected outcomes of the modified practice. Starting in Chapter 3 I will provide details about each phase of Pastoral Praxeology and I will describe how each phase needed to be modified in some way in order to do this research within the penal environment. This dissertation will ensure that the analysis of the practice of the Logos Bible Study effectively takes into account how the dynamics of prison Bible study differ from the dynamics at work in free world practices of Bible study. I agree with Spitale that those who minister in prisons should be aware of the culture of prison while seeking to help residents to improve their lives and while helping them to live "under the influence of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God."⁵² This research will offer an analysis of not only a specific religious practice but also of its environment. As a practical theologian and

⁵² Spitale, xiv

prison chaplain, I find it important to consider the effectiveness of all the religious practices that I must supervise in order to ensure the wellbeing of the prison residents and I find Pastoral Praxeology to be very helpful in achieving this.

Chapters 2 and 3 will offer observations of the practice of the Logos Bible Study and of the organization that created it, Jericho Ministries, within the research guidelines of the New Jersey Department of Corrections. During these chapters there will also be an evaluation of the strengths and challenges of the practice. In Chapters 4 and 5 there will be analyses of the practice through different Scriptural and theoretical lenses that can offer further support to the observations of the practice and help pinpoint its challenges. Chapter 6 is a theological interpretation of the effectiveness of the practice given all of its strengths and weakness followed by possibilities for the future of the practice in Chapter 7.

1.3.2. Introduction to Garden State Youth Correctional Facility



Figure 1. Garden State Youth Correctional Facility

Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (GSYCF) houses about 1300 young men between the ages of 17 and 27. It was built in 1968 with a large amount of space and equipment for programs in education, life skills, psychological enrichment as well as

emotional awareness and control with the purpose of serving men who were classified by the State as being young enough to go to school and acquire skills for a productive life.⁵³ Figure 1 shows the circular shape of the different sections of the facility, which is in line with the Panopticon model first put forth by Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century—a model that will be discussed at length in Chapter 6 of this research.

Like most American prisons, GSYCF sees religious practices as necessary programs to offer prisoners. The prison administration allows space for religious practice every day of the week. As will be described in more detail in Chapter 2, the Logos Bible Study (LBS), along with other Protestant Bible studies, occurs in the prison chapel—a space designed with the specific purpose of holding religious services. I have been involved in ministries that I have greatly appreciated at this facility for over 20 years, first as a volunteer and then as an employee. My years of experience lead me to believe that the description of the prison environment written by Lennie Spitale is by far one of the most accurate account of what I see and feel everyday at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility:

“Imagine a land where children are prohibited, where playgrounds are never built... Imagine a horizon of blue sky and cold gray cement in all directions... Conceive, if you can, of a country in which the citizens never procreate, nevertheless, the census continues to register enormous growth in the population... Here there are no bus stops, nor stations, nor parking garages... All the traffic is pedestrian but running is prohibited by law... money has disappeared and [credit cards] are forbidden... All of the clothes worn by the inhabitants of the extra-terrestrial landscape are identical... Each step and

⁵³ New Jersey Department of Corrections, <https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pages/index.shtml>. Web. 15 June 2018.

*each position of the inhabitants are known and under surveillance. And even if the obscure “Orwellian” night has fallen, the lights are always on, somewhere...”*⁵⁴

With this image of the prison setting for the Logos Bible Study, I will now offer in Chapter 2 a more detailed description of the practice.

⁵⁴ Lennie Spitale, *Prison Ministry: Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), vii.

2. The Logos Bible Study at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility

This chapter will offer an in-depth look at the genesis of the Logos Bible Study, a religious practice initiated by Jericho Ministries, Inc., a prison ministry that was based in New Jersey, USA. A brief history of Jericho Ministries will be given and situated within one of the broader theological contexts of 20th century America. I will discuss the priority of Christian discipleship held by the leadership of Jericho and how that priority was expressed in the prison ministry's practice of Bible study. I will then demonstrate that Jericho's Board of Trustees developed a desire to start a practice of Bible study that would be more focused than their current practice on the unique needs of the incarcerated. This desire led to an invitation for me to join their search for a new model of Christian Education that could be used in the prison environment as Jericho Ministries worked to become more relevant to the lives of incarcerated men and women. I will present those authors who influenced the conversations of the Jericho leadership as we created the Logos Bible Study (LBS). Finally I will offer a detailed observation of the practice at the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility.

2.1. The Logos Bible Study: a new Christian discipleship program of Jericho Prison Ministries

2.1.1. The neo-evangelical roots of Jericho Ministries, Inc.

In 1987, two ordained ministers (a man ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA)⁵⁵ and a woman ordained by Elim Fellowship—a Pentecostal tradition⁵⁶) came together and created Jericho Ministries while seeking prayerful guidance to answer what they considered “God’s call to offer the Gospel to those incarcerated by a system whose high recidivism rate demonstrates the need for an enhancement of rehabilitation procedures.”⁵⁷ Jericho started with three aspects of ministry: evangelism, discipleship and aftercare. Volunteers would evangelize through preaching, one-to-one engagement and worship services. They would offer discipleship through Bible studies and envelope visitation and give aftercare services such as support groups for the families of inmates.⁵⁸ This research is interested in the second ministry of Jericho: Christian discipleship.

In its brochure, Jericho Ministries described its Discipleship Ministry in the following way. “New-born Christians need to know how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems. Inmates have their own peculiar set of everyday problems to deal with. We need to encourage them to live out their faith, as well as share it with others. Through Bible study and discipleship training we enable them to develop a Christian lifestyle for the harsh setting of the

⁵⁵ See history of PC(USA) at <http://www.history.pcusa.org/history-online/presbyterian-history/history-church>.

⁵⁶ See history about Elim Fellowship at <http://www.elimfellowship.org/about/>.

⁵⁷ “An Overview of Jericho Ministries, Inc.,” October 24, 2003, 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1.

prison environment.”⁵⁹ Donald McKim, a theologian who produced influential research about the authority and interpretation of scripture in the 1980s can offer some helpful lenses with which to read Jericho Ministries’ discipleship objectives at the turn of the century.⁶⁰

“New-born Christians need to know how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems.” This mission statement reflects a perspective on regeneration and on the authority of Scripture. McKim would see the work of Jericho Ministries falling in line with the “neo-evangelicals” of the 20th century with its presupposition that regeneration (“being born again”) is a primary goal of Bible study.⁶¹ McKim would also note that Jericho places such a high authority on the Bible that they would declare that people “need” to learn how it offers guidance for solving everyday problems. Donald McKim would situate these points of view within the tradition of American neo-evangelicalism.⁶² Neo-evangelicalism shares in the belief of the evangelical tradition from 19th century England that there is a necessity for conversion or a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and that it is urgent to evangelize or to seek the conversion of sinful people to Christ.⁶³ Neo-evangelicals, most of whom acknowledge the work of the European Protestant Reformers of the 16th century, also see the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God that come to the church through the words of human writers and are authoritative because they seek to present Jesus Christ to humans by the

⁵⁹ “An Introduction to Jericho Ministries, Inc.”, panel 5.

⁶⁰ Donald McKim, *The Bible in Theology and Preaching*. Nashville: Abington Press (1994).

⁶¹ Ibid., 94.

⁶² “According to Harold Ockenga, the new evangelicalism differs from fundamentalism in its willingness to handle the societal problems that fundamentalism evaded.” McKim, *The Bible in Theology and Preaching*, 90.

⁶³ Ibid., 89.

work of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴ Since the witness of the Holy Spirit is tied “directly” to the content of the Scriptures (the Gospel), then by the work of the Holy Spirit the authority of Scripture comes “to be known and established for believers.”⁶⁵ Simply put, for neo-evangelicals, the Bible is authoritative because it is the Word of God.⁶⁶

Jericho Ministries confirmed that it was within the tradition of neo-evangelicalism with its official statement of faith found on the back of its brochure “An Introduction to Jericho Ministries, Inc.”: “We believe that Jesus Christ is...the only Savior of the world. Salvation is to be sought and found in no other...We believe that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God, the supreme rule of faith and practice. Scripture records the mighty acts of God in history and seeks to relate them to every phase of human life today under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” (See Figure 2, panel 6)

⁶⁴ Ibid., 96.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 95.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 94.

Panel 1

Panel 2

Panel 3

Panel 4

Panel 5

Panel 6

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in one God, Creator and Sovereign Lord of the universe, who exists as co-eternal Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, who came to earth as the Son of the world. Salvation is to be sought or found in no other.

We believe He died a substitutionary atoning death on the third day and ascended into heaven where He alone reigns as the one mediator between God and mankind.

We believe that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God, the supreme rule of faith and practice. Scripture records the mighty acts of God in history and seeks to relate them to every phase of human life today under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that to be reconciled to God is to be called to ministry. Our task is to share the good news of God's love with a broken humanity. Christ has given us the Great Commission to evangelize the world in the power and the blood of His Holy Spirit.

OBJECTIVES

Jericho Ministries is an interdenominational Christian outreach to the imprisoned. The objectives of this ministry can be summed up in three words: evangelism, discipleship, and aftercare.

EVANGELISM - Mandel's disobedience to God has produced mammoth problems in our society. Men and women need to be brought into right relationship with God. Regeneration changes lives, totally. This is because regeneration is with the root of the problem each person faces. spiritual illness and separation from God. We seek to make men and women as healthy as possible the world's means of forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

DISCIPLESHIP - New-born Christians need to know how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems. inmates have their own peculiar set of everyday problems to deal with. We need to encourage them to live out their faith, as well as share it with others. Through Bible study and discipleship training we enable them to develop a Christian lifestyle for the harsh setting of the prison environment.

AFTERCARE - Most estimates require some sort of assistance in getting re-established in society. The local church can be a tremendous source of inspiration and support to these men and women, enabling them to find housing, food, jobs, and clothing as needed until he or she is established and self-sufficient. We provide local churches with guidance in how to be an effective support group for a paroled prisoner.

JERICO MINISTRIES, INC.

P.O. BOX 416 #4 #65, N10066
OFFICE ADDRESS
 35 GARDEN STREET MT. HOLLY, N1 0B60
 609/261-2045

FIELD DIRECTORS
 James K. Cox (856) 234-2725
 David A. Ramsey (609) 953-7330
 Charles E. Allen, Jr. (609) 361-2445

AN INTRODUCTION TO MINISTRIES

"AS SOON AS THE PEOPLE HAD COME DOWN FLAT..."
 Jericho Ministries is now raising up and mobilizing a hidden army of Christians to do battle for him. Once as formidable as those immense walls which surround Jericho is to tear down the walls of human bondage and sin in the prisons of our land.

WE KNOW OUR ENEMY WELL!

"BRING MY SOUL OUT OF PRISON THAT I MAY PRAISE THY NAME"
 PSALMS 142:7

Help us to bring many souls out of the dark prison house of sin in order that they might lift up their voices in praise to God!

Figure 2. An Introduction to Jericho Ministries, Inc.

Jericho's neo-evangelical statement of faith was a guide for the sorts of Bible study curriculums that the organization would create or use. One Bible study curriculum that Jericho used primarily in its prison ministries to 16 federal, state and local prisons and jails in New Jersey was called *The Covenant and the Kingdom: A comprehensive personal and church Bible resource* edited by Charles Simpson. The book offers 126 lessons in Christian doctrine and supports each doctrine with Scriptures. The editor of the book states in the preface that the lessons were prepared under the conviction that "the Holy Bible is the Word of God, and is the standard for faith and practice...[and] with the conviction that the Holy Spirit is the instructor of divine truth and a relationship to the Holy Spirit is essential to understanding the message of the Bible."⁶⁷ The fact that this quote matches almost word for word with the Statement of Faith of Jericho Ministries demonstrates how this resource became one of the primary resources of Jericho's prison Bible studies during the 1990s and early 2000s.

2.1.2. The leadership of Jericho Ministries seeks to enhance its Bible study ministry

Since its inception in 1987, Jericho Ministries, Inc. has sought to use Scripture as the primary authority on God and God's will for humanity. The organization saw Scripture as its primary resource for participating in the Holy Spirit's work of spiritual renewal in prisons. *The Covenant and the Kingdom* demonstrated that it was a valuable asset to Jericho's mission in its first lesson on "The One True God." The curriculum states that the purpose of Lesson 1

⁶⁷ Charles Simpson (ed.), *The Covenant and the Kingdom: A Comprehensive Personal and Church Bible Resource*, England: Sovereign World (1995), 6.

is to look at how “God revealed Himself in Scripture.”⁶⁸ In Lesson 7 the curriculum declares, “the Bible teaches that [humanity] has a purpose for living.” Jericho preferred to use tools like *The Covenant and the Kingdom* because they affirmed its evangelical conviction that the Bible has the authority to inform humanity’s understanding of self and of God.

A brief look at how a typical lesson is planned in the *Covenant* bible study can offer more insight into Jericho’s priorities for prison Bible Study. Figure 3 shows an example of the system used by the *Covenant* Bible study—featured here is Lesson 3 of Section 3.

⁶⁸ Simpson (ed.), 17.

LESSON 3 – THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

PURPOSE

This lesson will examine the vital role of faith for entering the kingdom of God. By means of repentance, we turn from our former manner of life to demonstrate faith in God's provisions through Christ. We will consider the biblical nature of faith at work in this process.

GLOSSARY

Believe – to have firm conviction as to the reality or goodness of something (*Webster*).

Faith – (Greek: *pistis*) – confident trust and persuasion based upon testimony received.

Trust – assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone (*Webster*).

FAITH IS UNSHAKEABLE CONFIDENCE IN AN UNSHAKEABLE KINGDOM

Faith is in evidence when we are sure of those things which God has promised . . . those things in which we place our hope. Faith is also evident when we are certain about things that we can not see with the natural eye.

Biblical faith goes beyond 'believing in God' to 'believing God'. Abraham is an example of someone who believed God, trusting what God had promised, and acted accordingly.

The Scriptures reveal that it is necessary to demonstrate this kind of confident trust in God and His provisions if we are going to be pleasing to Him.

FAITH HAS CLEARLY DEFINED ORIGINS

We receive faith from outside of ourselves as a gift from God. We do not have the ability to generate faith apart from God's help.

The Bible declares Jesus Christ to be the Author and Perfecter of our faith. It is the work of Christ in our hearts that produces the initial ability to trust Him. His ongoing work in our lives, through the Holy Spirit, matures and perfects our faith.

Faith is made available to us in the proclamation of the kingdom of God. When we respond to the 'Good News' of Christ and His Kingdom, we are quickened in faith to believe His promise.

Faith comes by means of hearing God's Word. As we receive the word of God into our lives, faith is strengthened and increased.

Hebrews 11:1-7

Romans 4:17
Romans 5:1
Hebrews 11:8

Romans 10:8-11
Hebrews 11:5-6

Romans 10:17
Hebrews 12:2
Colossians 1:28
Ephesians 1:13
Ephesians 3:6
Colossians 1:3-6

Romans 10:17
Luke 8:15; Proverbs 8:34

FAITH IS DIRECTED TOWARDS GOD AND HIS WORD

Our initial response of faith is directed toward God Himself. It is in His Person that we place our trust and confidence.

Our faith in God is also demonstrated through trusting in His Word. Who God is and what God says are inseparably linked together in a holy relationship.

Our faith is exercised with assurance that God is completely faithful to fulfill His covenant promises. God steadfastly stands behind all that He has said He would do.

FAITH ACCOMPLISHES SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN OUR LIVES

It is through faith that we are born again to a living hope. We are considered as dead in our sin and without hope apart from Christ. But through faith in Christ, we are made alive and given an eternal hope built upon God's faithfulness.

It is through faith that we are able to receive eternal life as promised by God. We are not only quickened with a new life for this present world but are assured of spending eternity in God's presence.

It is by the exercise of faith that we are able to live our lives on earth in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is by living our lives in faith that we are able to be pleasing to our heavenly Father.

The exercise of faith gives us power over Satan and the works of the kingdom of darkness. Where Satan has evil designs and plans for destruction, those who trust in Christ are able to use their faith to overcome these evil works.

It is through faith at work in our lives that we are able to do the very works of Jesus. He has promised that if we would believe in Him, we would do the same works that He did through His ministry on earth. Through the working of faith we are able to demonstrate the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

APPLICATION

Review the time in your own life when you turned to God and first exercised faith toward His promises for you. Describe some of the benefits you have realized in your life as a result of placing your confidence in God. In what areas of your life (family, friends, finances, and other areas) do you recognize the need for a greater measure of trust in God's provision?

CONCLUSION

Repentance is acknowledging that our ways are wrong in the sight of God, and turning away from them to the ways of the Lord. Faith is trusting God so that a relationship with Him is established. It is this living relationship based upon confident trust in His faithfulness that we learn His ways which lead to life.

Mark 11:22

John 17:6-8

Hebrews 11

1 Peter 1:3
1 Peter 1:23-25
Hebrews 6:18-20
John 3:16
John 3:36
John 6:40
John 17:3

Romans 8:1-17
Galatians 5:16-25
Romans 10:8-11

2 Corinthians 10:3-5
Ephesians 1:18-23
Revelation 12:10-11

John 14:12
1 Corinthians 12:4-13

Galatians 5:2-25
2 Peter 1:5-11

It is Satan's ability to deceive us that makes self-will unreliable. By repenting of self-will and trusting God, we are freed from Satan's dominion. Faith is the positive step towards God's government and a new life of trusting God's provisions for our lives in His Kingdom.

Figure 3. The Covenant and the Kingdom, Section 3, Lesson 3

The lesson starts off with the topic, and then makes clear the purpose of the lesson. Next, it offers a glossary of terms to ensure that the students understand important concepts within the lesson. Then, it launches into the topic through a series of subtopics. Each of these subtopics has a series of statements and Scriptures that support each statement. After the subtopics, statements and supporting Scriptures are discussed, then the class goes on to discuss ways of practically applying the lesson to their lives. The “application” section of the lesson offers statements and questions that invite the student to consider how the lesson can enhance their understanding of their personal lives. After the application section, a concluding statement is given to summarize the major tenets of the lesson.⁶⁹ *The Covenant and the Kingdom* Bible Study has a lesson plan that supports the perspectives of many American neo-evangelicals at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. Jericho ministries adopted this model for the prison Bible study programs in order to support its neo-evangelical mission in prisons.

Jericho was able to bring this form of Bible study to prisons in New Jersey (including the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (GSYCF)) by getting in touch with the Chaplain Supervisors of the prisons, introducing the ministry and then requesting a time slot within the facility. The Field Directors of Jericho Ministries demonstrated to the Chaplain Supervisors of the NJ State Prisons that their volunteers were in accordance with the *New Jersey Administrative Code 10A:17-2.5*, **“Any person desiring to serve as a volunteer must represent or be a member in-good standing of an organization, such as, but not limited to, a church, mosque, synagogue, or educational entity, from which that person must**

⁶⁹ Ibid., 137-139.

obtain a letter of endorsement that shall be submitted along with the volunteer application.” The time slot was given to them at GSYCF was on Monday evenings at 6:30pm, which they held throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s.

During my second year at Princeton Theological Seminary, I participated in a mandatory Field Education placement, which led to my encounter with Jericho Ministries. For my placement in a “Public Area of Ministry” I chose GSYCF for the 1997-1998 school year.⁷⁰ Throughout that year I taught Bible studies, prepared and preached sermons for worship services and was an assistant counselor for the Young Long Termers program at GSYCF, an enrichment program for young men who had sentences of 10 years or more. My work with that Young Long Termers program and my relationship with the Chaplain Supervisor influenced my studies at Princeton in a way that pushed me to seek theologians that could enhance my thoughts about Christian education in prison. Once my internship was over, I was invited by the Chaplain Supervisor to start a new Bible study program at the prison. He gave me the time slot of Mondays from 5 pm to 6:30 pm, right before the time slot for Jericho Ministries. I would run into their volunteers on Monday evenings when I would end my session in the GSYCF chapel and they would start their session at 6:30pm.

By Fall 1998, the Field Directors and Board of Trustees of Jericho Ministries invited me to join their organization and their conversations about finding ways to enhance their

⁷⁰ “The mission of the Office of Field Education at Princeton Theological Seminary is to provide at least two internship placements for MDiv, MACEF, and dual-degree students. At least one internship placement will be provided for MA(TS) degree student. For these placements they will receive supervised training in the practice of ministry and theological reflection. The goal is that each student will be equipped for leadership in a congregation, the larger church, the classroom, the academy, and/or the public areas of ministry.” *Field Education Handbook*. Princeton Theological Seminary (2017), 2.

ministries for the 21st century. The evangelical organization took a closer look at the mission it had written for its Discipleship Ministry: *“Inmates have their own peculiar set of everyday problems to deal with. We need to encourage them to live out their faith as well as share it with others. Through Bible study and discipleship training, we enable them to develop a Christian lifestyle for the harsh setting of the prison environment”*.⁷¹ Jericho’s Board of Trustees began to make a priority of finding new volunteers who could help develop new ministries.⁷² The Trustees believed I could help them to enhance their Discipleship Ministry and hired me as a part-time Field Director in April 1999.⁷³ In that initial employment agreement, Jericho expected me to help them develop new discipleship programs for their prison ministries.⁷⁴

Since the Jericho Board of Trustees knew that I was going to complete a Master’s Degree in Christian Education, they gave me the task of researching a new model of Christian Education for prison that would enhance their ministry.⁷⁵ As I shared earlier, when I met Jericho, the organization was using a model for Bible study that promoted the values of what McKim called “neo-evangelicalism,” which include the belief that the Bible is the “inspired

⁷¹ Figure 2, Panel 5.

⁷² “The Jericho Board of Trustees, its staff and volunteers recognized the need to enhance its ministry in New Jersey. To help in its expansion, Jericho brought on a full-time office manager (who herself is a former inmate that has benefited from the work of God through Jericho), and a seminary graduate as a full-time field director. The new staff build upon the foundation of the ministry’s founders by helping develop the new programs, facilitating communication between the teams, **recruiting new volunteers**, as well as finding new funding sources and partners for ministry.” “An Overview of Jericho Ministries, Inc.,” Oct. 10, 2004.

⁷³ Atkins, “Report to the Jericho Board of Trustees,” May 1999.

⁷⁴ See “Agreement between Charles Atkins, Jr. and Jericho Ministries.”

⁷⁵ See “Research for a Model of Christian Education in Prison,” May 9, 2000.

and authoritative Word of God, the supreme rule of faith and practice [that] records the mighty acts of God in history and seeks to relate them to every phase of human life today under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,” and one Bible study program that carried out these values was *The Covenant and the Kingdom*.⁷⁶ The Jericho Trustees were looking for a new discipleship program that would have the same level of conversation with the Scripture as *The Covenant and the Kingdom* but would also offer more opportunities for students to gain insights on practical applications of the Scriptures. Jericho recognized that “inmates have their own peculiar set of everyday problems to deal with,” and therefore prison residents should have a Bible study that more directly addresses their incarcerated environment.

A report to the Board of Trustees of Jericho Ministries in May 2000 showing the essential content of my conversations with the Trustees demonstrates that it was a priority for Jericho to create Bible studies that directly addressed the living situations of incarcerated students.⁷⁷ That report’s section titled, “Needs of the Inmates: What themes should be considered,” proposes a survey that would find out what the inmates considered important to learn and what format best suits them for learning within the prison environment. “Consideration should be given to the personal and environmental challenges faced by the inmates and what God has revealed to them as themes for discipleship training...[In light of] the culturally-based factors of diversity and division that exist in the prison culture.”⁷⁸ In the year 2000 the Trustees gave me the support necessary to give incarcerated students an

⁷⁶ “An Introduction to Jericho Ministries,” panel 6.

⁷⁷ Atkins, “Research for a Model of Christian Education in Prison Ministry,” Report for the Board of Trustees of Jericho Ministries, Inc., May 9, 2000.

⁷⁸ “Research for a Model of Christian Education in Prison,” 2.

opportunity to contribute to the structure and content of Christian education they would receive at the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility.

Even though the exact content of those conversations with the incarcerated Christians at GSYCF were not cleared for inclusion in this research (see the section on my dealings with the NJDOC Departmental Research Review Board), the desires of the inmates for an enriching discipleship program were well summarized within the mission statement of a program for prison residents who had sentences of 10 years or more. During my student internship at GSYCF through Princeton Theological Seminary, I served as a facilitator in the Young Long Termers' Program which had as its mission statement the following. "We commit to develop our abilities to gain knowledge of ourselves, to further our quest for knowledge in general and to encourage each other in these efforts. In order to achieve these goals we establish this program, through which we become accountable to each other for our behavior and consequently, more responsible for our individual lives."⁷⁹ The mission statement reflects what inmates who seek enriching programs at GSYCF believe to be effective programs—those that offer tools for creating enriching lives in prison and after prison.

In light of these perspectives, the Jericho Trustees agreed with my suggestion to have Jericho staff and volunteers to find resources that match the spiritual, emotional and intellectual needs that have been expressed by the prison residents.⁸⁰ I, along with the members of the Board of Trustees, actively sought out resources that would reflect sensitivity to the situation of prisoners and their unique challenges in trying to live a Christ-centered life

⁷⁹ See Appendix Jericho Ministries Board of Trustees Report. May 26, 1999, 2.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

in prison. In our conversations I recognized that the Trustees were interested in the establishment of mentoring relationships between volunteers and prison residents and we agreed that the structure of the Bible study was important along with its content. During my seminary studies in Christian education, I was introduced to Roberta Hestenes' book *Using the Bible in Groups* and the book *Friere for the Classroom: A sourcebook for Liberatory Teaching*, edited by Ira Shor. I put these two works into the conversation with the Trustees regarding the formation of Jericho's new discipleship program.

The Trustees and staff of Jericho Ministries decided to adopt certain perspectives and suggestions of Hestenes in the creation of the new discipleship program. Dr. Hestenes, a Presbyterian minister and the first woman president of a Christian liberal arts college named Eastern College, offered perspectives on structuring small group Bible studies that the Trustees found interesting. Hestenes wrote that one could build a successful small group Bible study by having a good understanding of the following issues: the promise or purpose of the group; the contracting of participants; the types of participants; the time schedule of the group activity; the intentional selection of the type of group; the types of participants; the commitments of the participants; and the stages of group life.⁸¹ The Jericho Trustees already had firm understandings about the purpose and the type of participants of the group: the discipleship of incarcerated young adult men alongside Jericho volunteers within the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. The Trustees were open however to discovering: (1) the structure of the discipleship group and (2) what exactly the participants would be "contracted" or expected to do in order to participate.

⁸¹ Roberta Hestenes. *Studying the Bible in Groups* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 19.

The insights of Hestenes helped to shape the structure of the new Jericho discipleship program and the requirements of the participants. Hestenes states that discipleship groups offer “a complete experience of learning about and living the Christian faith.”⁸² These groups use methods of “sharing questions, inductive discussion Bible study with attention to application and conversational prayer” in order to focus on helping the participants to discover the possibilities of Christian life through “personal sharing, discussion Bible study, an emphasis on active discipleship and praying aloud.”⁸³ Jericho’s leadership felt that what Hestenes suggested could enhance the model that they were currently following through *The Covenant and the Kingdom* Bible study. The Hestenes model offered a structure that would allow for the incarcerated Christians at GSYCF to have a program that gave them access to enriching mentoring relationships and that allowed them to bring the testimonies of their personal lives into conversation with the testimonies of the Bible.

Of course, in order to maintain such a discipleship group, there needed to be clear rules and expectations given to the participants in the group. Hestenes argued that in order for a group to function efficiently over time there needed to be “commitments” or disciplines and norms accepted by the group participants. Hestenes defined disciplines as the “guidelines within which the group members agree to function,” and the “shared expectations about appropriate behavior within the group.”⁸⁴ One major discipline that was considered essential to the Bible study was regular attendance in the group. “If the purpose of the group includes building relationships of love and care among the members, a floating population will make it

⁸² Ibid., 26.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 28.

difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish the group's purpose."⁸⁵ While previous Bible study programs sponsored by Jericho did not mandate a certain level of attendance (all people were welcome at anytime), this new discipleship program would mandate it, since the Jericho leadership decided that a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit would be possible for group participants if they made it a priority in their schedules.⁸⁶

In regard to other behavior norms, Hestenes also offered some insights that the Jericho leadership would use in the creation of its new discipleship program. In *Studying the Bible in Groups*, Hestenes states the importance of members of the discipleship group making commitments to confidentiality and limited advice giving. The discipline of confidentiality "assumes that anything that is shared in the group will not be mentioned outside of it."⁸⁷ The Jericho trustees agreed with including this requirement in the new program in order to encourage participants to put important parts of their life stories into conversation with the Scriptures.⁸⁸ The Jericho leadership wanted to limit people in the amount of advice they would give to other participants. Jericho was very sensitive to the prison environment where correction happens daily. They wanted to put to work their belief that the Holy Spirit could speak to the lives of everyone through Bible study. Therefore, Bible students should focus on sharing what they believe the Scriptures might be saying to their hearts and minds instead of

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ "Each class will be one hour and a half in length, once a week for 12 sessions." "Jericho Ministries Discipleship Curriculum Draft," November 2001, 2.

⁸⁷ Hestenes, 29.

⁸⁸ "Small Group Face-to-Face: the students will be in groups of three...where they are invited to share their own personal experiences of the issues being discussed." Jericho Ministries Discipleship Curriculum Draft, November 2001, 4.

imposing their experiences and insights on others. The participants need a space where they can feel confident that others will listen to and learn from the testimonies of their joys and challenges without being interrupted by condescending or ignorant corrections or judgments. “One common tendency when someone shares a concern or problem is for other group members to begin telling the speaker what he or she ought to do. Often these solutions are proposed long before the true situation has been really understood. Careful listening should precede any suggestions. [The epistle of] James tells us to be ‘quick to listen, but slow to speak.’”⁸⁹ Jericho Ministries was trying to create a new program that help people to listen to deeply to each other as well as to the teachings of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to recognizing that Hestenes’ insights would be useful in shaping the structure of a new discipleship group, Jericho’s leadership was also open to a new teaching style for delivering the content of its new program. In their work in New Jersey prisons, the volunteers from Jericho Ministries, when following the format of *The Covenant and the Kingdom* Bible study, would use a classic teaching style where the instructor brought information to the students. According to *The Covenant and the Kingdom*, the instructor was an elder in the Christian faith and the information was Scripture-based Christian doctrines. However, Hestenes brought to Jericho’s leadership an understanding of a function of Bible group instructors that could lead all participants—students and instructors—into deeper understandings of the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Hestenes called the leaders of small group Bible study “facilitators or enablers” in order to insist on their role as helpers and guides

⁸⁹ Hestenes, 29.

“rather than as teachers or experts.”⁹⁰ The small group “facilitator” focuses on encouraging the group participants to engage the biblical texts as well as other members of the group with the hope of everyone fulfilling the purpose of the group and experiencing positive self-development.⁹¹ Inspired by Hestenes, the Jericho Ministries Discipleship program called for group facilitators instead of Bible “teachers”.⁹²

Hestenes’ declarations on the functions of Bible group instructors also helped Jericho to be receptive to a form of “liberatory” teaching inspired by Paolo Friere. Liberatory education is a type of education inspired by Paolo Friere in the 1980s that actively seeks the empowerment of students instead of the submission of students through normal western models of education that can be used by dominant political forces to convince students to support the status quo.⁹³

Nina Wallerstein was inspired by Paolo Friere to write about an approach to liberatory education called “problem-posing education.”⁹⁴ Problem-posing education is a process that follows what Friere considered the purpose of education: human liberation. This form of education does not presuppose that the learner is an empty vessel to be filled by the teacher as an object of education. Rather, problem-posing education offers the perspective that learners

⁹⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² “Ideally the course will have...a Head Facilitator and an Assistant Facilitator...”, Jericho Ministries Discipleship Program Draft, Nov. 2001, 2.

⁹³ Ira Shor, “Editor’s Introduction: Using Friere’s Ideas in the Classroom—How Do We Practice Liberatory Teaching?” *Friere for the Classroom*. Ira Shor, ed. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers (1987), 1, 5.

⁹⁴ Nina Wallerstein, “Problem-Posing Education: Friere’s Method for Transformation,” *Friere for the Classroom*. Ira Shor, ed. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers (1987).

enter into the process of learning “not by acquiring facts but by constructing their reality in social exchange with others.”⁹⁵ Problem-posing education, as opposed to classical problem solving, is a group process that uses personal experience in order to create social connectedness and mutual responsibility. This process is a response to a social situation where societal pressures undermine students’ confidence and consequently the students are in need of social empowerment.⁹⁶ Problem-posing education is a dialogical approach that invites instructors and students to participate as co-learners seeking to become critical thinkers. In this form of education the instructor does not define the problems and offer the solutions while the students watch passively. Rather, in this form of liberatory education define the problems through various shared perspectives and the instructor offers solutions but also invites the students to critique those solutions and share their own ideas for resolving the defined problems. The problem-posing approach argues that critical thinking starts with an individual sharing his or her understanding of the historical and socioeconomic context of his or her life and then continues toward discerning actions and decisions that people can make in order to gain control of their lives or, in other words, “true knowledge evolves from the interaction of reflection and action.”⁹⁷

The Board of Trustees of Jericho Ministries believed that having facilitators who encouraged the problem-posing approach to education would create a space in the prison where the transformative work of the Holy Spirit could take place and be evidenced in the practical lives of the incarcerated students. The problem-posing approach seemed to be a

⁹⁵ Ibid., 34.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

useful tool that would help Jericho to achieve its goal of helping inmates in their desire for deeper understandings of themselves and their world in practical ways.⁹⁸

2.1.3. The new Discipleship Program of Jericho Ministries: the Logos Bible Study

The draft of the Discipleship Curriculum of the new ministry to be performed by Jericho Ministries at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility was presented in November 2001 with the goal of creating “a dynamic for learning that enables disadvantaged and incarcerated young people in Christ to translate Scriptural teachings into understandable methods of application for various life situations.”⁹⁹ In this practice of Bible study, the problem-posing method as described by Wallenstein was the adopted teaching style. The Hestenes-inspired discipleship group would require the participants to commit to one session per week for 12 weeks. The program’s facilitators had the following tasks: (1) to make clear the spiritual and educational goals of the program; (2) to provide a safe space where listening and respect of different perspectives and experiences are priorities and to provide a firm schedule for the facilitators and the students that requires the participants to make the Bible study a priority in their lives; (3) to enable the students to put their personal lives into conversation with the Holy Scriptures by sharing their perspectives on the social problems that are addressed during the Bible study; and (4) to offer methods for discerning what resolutions

⁹⁸ “It is...our purpose to develop our abilities to gain knowledge of ourselves, to further our quest for knowledge in general and to encourage each other in these efforts. In order to achieve these goals we establish this program through which we become accountable to each other for our behavior and consequently, more responsible for our individual lives.” Mission Statement for Young Long Termers Self-Development Program. Report for the Jericho Board of Trustees. May 26, 1999.

⁹⁹ See Appendix: Jericho Board of Trustees, “Jericho Ministries Discipleship Program,” November 2001, 1.

the Holy Spirit has revealed to each person through the Scriptures. In addition to the work of Hestenes and Wallenstein, there were other influences on the structure and content of the discipleship program that came to be called the Logos Bible Study (LBS). This section will reveal those other influences that gave rise to the LBS practice and the expectations of the participants.

True to their evangelical roots, the Trustees of Jericho Ministries wanted to create a Bible study where the Holy Spirit could reveal the will of God for the lives of prison residents during and after incarceration. As noted earlier, even though *the Covenant and The Kingdom* model for Bible study fit within the neo-evangelical perspective of Jericho, conversations with incarcerated Christians confirmed what the Trustees, volunteers and friends of Jericho had begun to suspect at the beginning of the 21st century: the practice of Bible study needed to offer methods of practically applying spiritual principles within the incarcerated environment and confirm that the Holy Spirit could transform lives in prison. Consequently, Jericho brought in the work of evangelical author James Gills as a supplement to the Bible during the study.

A member of the Jericho Trustees had read *The Unseen Essential* written by James Gills and believed that his evangelical perspective would enhance the work of Jericho. This book was presented as one that could creatively give prison residents help in participating in Christian discipleship while in prison.¹⁰⁰ At this point, it would be helpful to address the evangelical author James Gills and his books that influenced the formation of Jericho's Logos Bible Study. James Gills is a world-renowned ophthalmologist who founded St. Luke's

¹⁰⁰ Report to the Jericho Board of Trustees, October 17, 2001.

Cataract and Laser Institute in 1968 and has treated cataracts for over 40 years.¹⁰¹ He has authored 195 medical articles and co-authored 10 medical reference books.¹⁰² In addition to this, he is an executive who was awarded the 1990 Florida Entrepreneur of the Year for the State of Florida, as well as the 2000 Philanthropist of the Year by the National Society of Fundraising Executives. He received the two awards in light of his purchase of the IronMan Triathlon in 1989 and his creation of Love Press, a Christian not-for-profit publishing company, around 1986.¹⁰³ Through Love Press, Dr. Gills has authored 19 books on Christian living.¹⁰⁴ Gills has had the practice of giving his books for free to the incarcerated and has donated to over 2000 prisons and jails in the United States¹⁰⁵, including the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility.

Members of the Board of Trustees eventually agreed that Jericho would buy and distribute the *Unseen Essential* as part of its new discipleship program. The book is a fictional story about a successful engineer who is surprised that his wife tries to divorce him and puts a restraining order against him while he was reaching the pinnacle of his success. As he tries to put his life back together, he meets an older Christian man who mentors him in the Christian faith. Through this story Gills offers an evangelical perspective on how the Christian faith can translate into daily life. Gills teaches through the book that faith is the “unseen essential” of

¹⁰¹ John Barry. “More than meets the eye: Ophthalmologist, writer, philanthropist, triathlete, man of science, man of faith. For James P. Gills, one passion has never been enough.” St. Petersburg Times. July 29, 2007.

¹⁰² <http://www.lovepress.com/gills.htm>, October 30, 2017.

¹⁰³ See <http://www.ironman.com/fr-fr/triathlon-news/articles/2003/12/theres-busy-then-theresthe-type-triple-a-life-ofdr-james-p-gills.aspx#axzz4x1KCcd7f>. October 30, 2017; and The Unseen Essential, “About the Author”.

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.lovepress.com/gills.htm>, October 30, 2017.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

life and the four steps of faith are (1) coming into agreement with God's perspective on the sinful nature of humanity; (2) development of a dependency on God for a nourishing life; (3) gaining enough trust in God to surrender to the processes that God offers humankind for growth; and (4) seeking oneness or intimacy with God by establishing practices that make one always aware of God's presence.¹⁰⁶ The Jericho Trustees liked not only the lessons being taught through the lives of the book's main characters, they also liked that in the story the lessons of faith were being taught through a Bible-based mentoring relationship between the two main characters. The leadership of Jericho hoped that their new discipleship program would use intimate mentoring relationships in order to show the students ways of applying Scriptural lessons and spiritual perspectives within the violently oppressive environment of prison.¹⁰⁷

The influence of Gills continued as his book *Temple Maintenance* was discovered by the leadership of Jericho and was eventually included in the new discipleship group. This was another book that was freely given to prisons by Gills. The chaplain at GSYCF introduced it to Jericho's Trustees who quickly added it to the supplemental reading of the Logos Bible Study. *Temple Maintenance* introduced Gills' perspectives on theological anthropology, which the leaders of Jericho thought would help the practitioners of the Logos Bible Study to find practical applications of the lessons learned during the Bible study. *Temple Maintenance* was written by James Gills but it was inspired by Watchman Nee. The perspectives in spiritual anthropology presented in *Temple Maintenance* were drawn directly from the books

¹⁰⁶ James P. Gills, *The Unseen Essential: A Story for our Troubled Times* (Tarpon Springs, Florida: Love Press, 1990), 224-228.

¹⁰⁷ "An Introduction to Jericho Ministries," panel 5.

of Watchman Nee—especially Nee’s book called *The Spiritual Man*. It is understandable that a physician and evangelical author like James Gills would be inspired by the theological anthropology of Watchman Nee, since Nee offers a kind of spiritual dissection of the human being.¹⁰⁸ This, along with a charismatic view of the Christian life, has made him one of the most influential evangelical authors in 20th century America.¹⁰⁹ A review of the major concepts of Gills’ *Temple Maintenance* and of its inspiration, Watchman Nee’s *Spiritual Man*, is important for understanding Jericho’s choice of content for the Logos Bible Study.

The theological anthropology of James Gills’ *Temple Maintenance* offers that the human being is made up of three parts which all need proper nourishment in order to function properly: the body, the mind and the spirit. He equates each of these parts to the different parts of the classic Tabernacle of Israel: the outer court is the body, the holy place is the mind, and the holy of holies is the spirit.¹¹⁰ Watchman Nee inspired Gills with his own tripartite view of the human being: the spirit, the soul and the body.¹¹¹ As I offered earlier, Gills is a physician who has an intense commitment to physical fitness.¹¹² It is understandable therefore that his section on the body read like a fitness book with suggestions for physical exercise and diet.¹¹³ Gills posits that the human body is a wondrous temple that should be enjoyed and

¹⁰⁸ Dana Roberts, *Understanding Watchman Nee* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980), 75.

¹⁰⁹ G. Richard Fisher, “Watch out for Watchman Nee,” *Apologetics Index*, <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/2694-watching-out-for-watchman-nee> (accessed 15 October 2017).

¹¹⁰ James P. Gills, *Temple Maintenance* (Tarpon Springs, Florida: Love Press, 1989), 22.

¹¹¹ Roberts, 79.

¹¹² John Barry. “More than meets the eye: Ophthalmologist, writer, philanthropist, triathlete, man of science, man of faith. For James P. Gills, one passion has never been enough.” *St. Petersburg Times*. July 29, 2007.

¹¹³ Gills, *Temple Maintenance*, 8-10 and 28-33.

appreciated as a gift from God through proper maintenance.¹¹⁴ Gills sees the mind as having attributes such as thought, reason, memory, emotions and will. He also sees the Bible term for the mind to be the “soul” and uses it interchangeably with “mind” in his book.¹¹⁵ The mind is the “holy place” because it has the capacity to receive the mind of Christ and be renewed through the Word of God, which makes it capable of being put to work in the service and worship of God.¹¹⁶ For Gills the “holy of holies” is the human spirit, which has the faculties of: communion with God’s spirit; conscience that sensitizes a regenerate person to the will of God; and intuition which is inner knowing or guidance from God.¹¹⁷ In his discussion about the tripartite human being, Gills refers quite a bit to Watchman Nee as the inspiration of his perspective.¹¹⁸

Spirit, soul and body are the elements of the tripartite human being espoused by Watchman Nee.¹¹⁹ Nee defines the spirit as having three parts: the conscience or knowledge of right and wrong; the intuition which is a person’s level of awareness and knowledge and can go beyond normal human methods of learning by the power of the Holy Spirit; and the ability of fellowship or intimate relationship with God.¹²⁰ For Nee the soul has many gifts from God including the mind and the will.¹²¹ In the *Spiritual Man*, Nee writes the least about the body but affirms its importance since the body receives and reflects a person’s “world-

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 70.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 72-74.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 99-105.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 104-105.

¹¹⁹ Roberts, 79.

¹²⁰ Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1998), 1, 17-19

¹²¹ Ibid., 1, 29, 30.

consciousness.”¹²² “Although intuition, fellowship, and conscience of our spirit may be very healthy, and although the mind, emotion and will of our soul may be renewed [by the Holy Spirit], we have not become a spiritual man if our outward body is not healthy and renewed in accordance with our spirit and our soul.”¹²³ Of the three parts of the human being Nee states that the soul occupies an important mediating position in determining whether a person’s outward actions conform to the inner witness of God’s spirit as we see in Roberts’ representation in Figure 4.¹²⁴

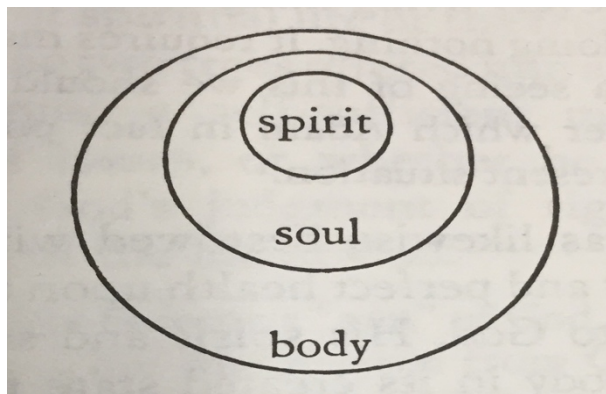


Figure 4. The tripartite human being

While Watchman Nee emphasized the correlation between the tripartite human and the Holy Trinity, Gills emphasized correlations between the tripartite human and the classic temple of Jerusalem as we see in Figure 5 with its Outer Court (or Court of Israel), the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.¹²⁵

¹²² Roberts, 78.

¹²³ Ibid., 3, 659.

¹²⁴ Roberts, 79.

¹²⁵ Gills, *Temple Maintenance*, 22.

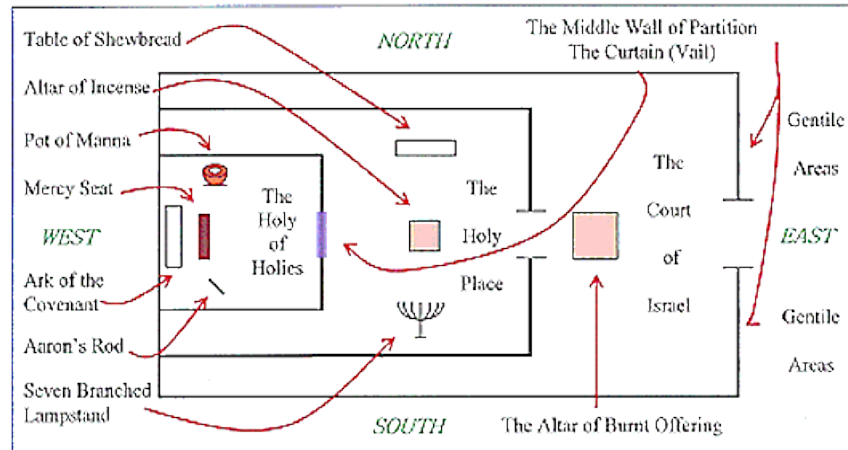


Figure 5. The Temple of Jerusalem

Even though the theological anthropology of Gills and Nee held in common the complete human is a “trinity—the composite of spirit, soul and body,” they differed somewhat in their terminology and analysis of each part.¹²⁶ “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹²⁷ Although both were inspired by Bible verses like this, Gills saw the word soul as a biblical term for the mind and emphasized its intellectual capacities of reason and understanding while Nee described the soul as having reason and understanding, he emphasized it equally with other important faculties like emotion and will.¹²⁸ The Board of Trustees of Jericho Ministries decided to include the tripartite perspectives of both Gills’ *Temple Maintenance* and Nee’s *Spiritual Man* decided to add a fourth part of human being to be addressed in the Logos Bible Study: the mind.

¹²⁶ Roberts, 78 and Gills, *Temple Maintenance*, 22.

¹²⁷ 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (New International Version)

¹²⁸ Nee, 2, 421-493, 3: 495-572 and 3, 573-656

I will now return to the mission statement of the Jericho Ministries Discipleship ministry in order to demonstrate what motivated the leadership of Jericho to treat the mind as a subject separate from the soul, spirit and body. “New-born Christians need to know how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems. Inmates have their own peculiar set of everyday problems to deal with. We need to encourage them to live out their faith, as well as share it with others. Through Bible study and discipleship training we enable them to develop a Christian lifestyle for the harsh setting of the prison environment.”¹²⁹ By stating that new-born Christians need “to know how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems,” the leadership of Jericho had several discussions on levels of education for the incarcerated as well as methodologies for learning how to read and to increase one’s level of understanding of the Scriptures. I along with the other members of the Board of Trustees and staff believed that prison could be an ideal place for Christian education to occur if “its components are adjusted to the language, culture and needs of the prisoners.”¹³⁰ This perspective led to deep discussions about the importance of having a practice of Christian discipleship that intentionally works to increase the capacity of the mind to understand.

Since my involvement in those discussions on the mind and on modes of learning with the leadership of Jericho Ministries occurred from 2000 to 2001, just after I had completed my studies in Divinity and in Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary, I offered to that conversation the work of James Loder—one of the professors at Princeton and an ordained Presbyterian minister who influenced many of my contributions to the conversations.

¹²⁹ “An Introduction to Jericho Ministries, Inc.”, Figure 2, panel 5.

¹³⁰ Atkins, “Research for a Model of Christian Education in Prison Ministry,” Report to Board of Trustees of Jericho Ministries, May 9, 2000, 1.

James Loder was greatly inspired by Sigmund Freud and Søren Kierkegaard in his writings on human development and Christian Education.¹³¹ The aspects of his work that deeply penetrated the conversations on Christian discipleship among the leaders of Jericho included his concepts of metanoia or repentance, transformation and the transformational Logic of the Holy Spirit as explained in his book *The Transforming Moment*.

James Loder addressed the Greek New Testament word, “metanoia,” in a way that convinced the Trustees of Jericho Ministries to bring his work into the planning of the Logos Bible Study. He acknowledges that the Greek word basically means “to change one’s mind” or to experience a conversion resulting from the coming of the Kingdom of God through the presence of Jesus as mediator.¹³² The Jericho Trustees agreed with Loder’s comments and offered that “metanoia” could have other nuances such as the re-formation of self and the reversal of one’s past that goes beyond the NJ Correctional System’s normal expectations of rehabilitation and recovery.¹³³ For Loder the concept that was more important than “metanoia,” but included it, was his perception of transformation. In his treatise on transformation, Loder’s profound reflections on human development and divine order come to light. He states that transformation occurs when hidden orders of coherence and meaning are revealed within a person’s given frame of reference and begin to alter the truisms of the given frame of reference and to reorder its components.¹³⁴ In its quest to create a new ministry that

¹³¹ Dana Wright, “James Edwin Loder, Jr.,” Talbot School of Theology, Biola University.

http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/protestant/james_loder/#bio (accessed 6 August 2017).

¹³² James Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1989), 225.

¹³³ Atkins, Report to Jericho Board of Trustees, June 20, 2001, 3.

¹³⁴ Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 229.

could create a space for transformation in an institution for incarceration, the Jericho leadership decided it needed a religious practice that could challenge the adopted and imposed frames of meaning of the students. The Logos Bible Study chose to offer a Loder-inspired method of transforming “existing self-imposed and socially imposed models of learning and development.”¹³⁵

Loder’s principle of the transformational logic of the Spirit was a key concept in the formation of the Logos Bible Study and even though I will offer an in-depth look into this concept in Chapter 5 of this research, it is important to note here its influence in the discussions leading to the formation of the Logos Bible Study. Loder posits that human beings have a logic or process of psychological development that can occur by living and learning over time. When the human spirit comes into relationship with the Holy Spirit, the human process of development can be transformed by the Holy Spirit’s logic of transformation.¹³⁶ In other words, when the human spirit, which is grounded in the human psyche, enters into communion with the Holy Spirit which is grounded in God, the human spirit’s developmental transformations on psychological and physical levels are transformed so that “all of the human spirit’s creative expressions in the field of human action point toward the same origin and destiny as the Holy Spirit.”¹³⁷ In his consideration of the neurological work of Wilder Penfield and of the dialectical work of Søren Kierkegaard, affirmed what some have called the “brain-mind theory,” where even though the mind and brain work together as a unit, “the mind has the specific function of focusing and sustaining awareness, reasoning,

¹³⁵ Atkins, Jericho Ministries Report, June 20, 2001, 4.

¹³⁶ Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 153.

¹³⁷ Atkins, Jericho Ministries Report, June 20, 2001, 5.

deciding and understanding.”¹³⁸ The mind is the composer of meaning because it uses information stored in the brain to compose meaningful conduct in everyday life.¹³⁹ Loder’s perspectives inspired the Jericho leadership to make sure that the Logos Bible Study would become a practice that gave opportunities for the participants to gain a greater understanding of themselves and of God in order to experience a re-orientation of the self toward God that leads to positive self-development despite the prison context.

For the Jericho Trustees, their concern about the transformation of one’s psychological development in the prison context where understanding can be dulled by illiteracy and special educational needs in addition to the harsh environment required that their new discipleship practice of prison Bible study pay special attention to the mind. Donald McKim would say that their concern over the mind follows the neo-evangelicals who historically held that reason can be an instrument of faith that can believers can use “in the service of further obedience and understanding.”¹⁴⁰ Watchman Nee and James Gills both acknowledged the Greek words for mind used in the New Testament scriptures—“*dianoia*¹⁴¹ and *noos*¹⁴²”—however both folded it into the soul. Jericho’s Logos Bible study was created to address practical ways for a person to gain a healthy body, mind, soul and spirit. With the mind seen as the method of understanding, the Jericho Trustees modified the theological anthropology of Watchman Nee to what we see in Figure 6.

¹³⁸ Loder, 76.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ McKim, *The Bible in Theology and Preaching*, 94.

¹⁴¹ From Mark 12:30, “Love God with all your heart, soul, MIND and strength.”

¹⁴² From Romans 12:2, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your MIND.”

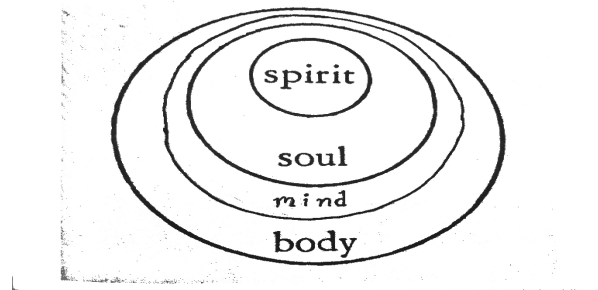


Figure 6. Jericho's modified theological anthropology

While the spirit remains a source of inspiration, and the soul a mediator between the information received from the external world of the body and from the internal world of the spirit, the mind is the doorway of understanding that deciphers language, social codes and cultural cues. If we were to use the temple analogy, the mind would be the doorway to the soul as pictured in Figure 7.

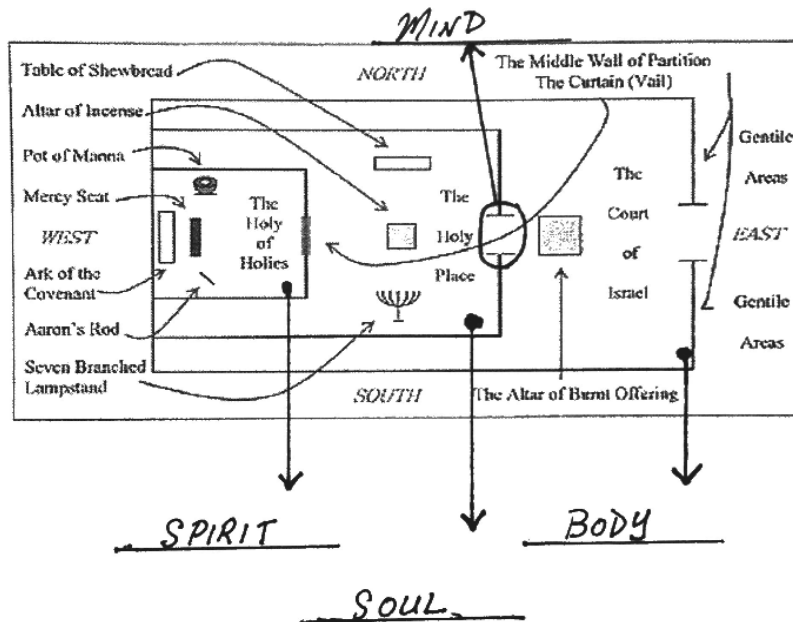


Figure 7. The Temple with a modified theological anthropology

The Logos Bible Study was launched in February 2002 and it started with five volunteers and 12 inside students who made a commitment to the practice.¹⁴³ The volunteers were instructed to use the problem-posing method of teaching based on the belief that the Holy Spirit can offer something for everyone to share in the Bible study. Everyone who participated in the practice made a commitment of 12 weeks, one session per week, an hour and a half per session. Each participant made a promise to listen to the perspectives of others and to refrain from making statements that generalize to judge others. The participants (inmates and volunteers) were told to expect to study Scriptures along within large and small group discussions about spiritual perspectives on human personal and social values, on the emptiness a person can feel without relationship with God and on the importance of submitting the body and mind to God's enlightenment process and of increasing one's intimacy with God by gaining and maintaining a healthy soul and spirit.¹⁴⁴ Every participant, whether incarcerated or not, was expected to have an enriching experience where relationships with God would be deepened.

Until the creation of the Logos Bible Study, Jericho Ministries used styles of Bible studies in New Jersey that were patterned after *The Covenant and the Kingdom: A Comprehensive Personal and Church Bible Resource*—a resource used primarily by American Evangelical Christians. While there were groups in other States who practiced Bible Study in prison, there is no evidence in the reports to the Jericho Board of Trustees that any practices of any of these other groups influenced Jericho's formation of the Logos Bible Study (LBS).

¹⁴³ See Appendix: Atkins, Jericho Ministries Report, October 17, 2001, November 2001 and Jericho Ministries Report September 25, 2002.

¹⁴⁴ Atkins, Jericho Ministries Report, November 2001.

LBS was a practice that was unique to Jericho Ministries' history with its blend of evangelical and charismatic authors. It stands to reason that a ministry that was founded by a Presbyterian minister and a Pentecostal minister would initiate such a practice. Nevertheless, Jericho's willingness to use a technique from Liberatory Pedagogy also demonstrated a sincere desire to try unfamiliar methods to help the incarcerated to have better lives despite the hardships of prison and to help change prison culture.

2.2. Observations of the practice of the Logos Bible Study

In this section I will give an overview of the structure of the Logos Bible Study followed by a more detailed look at the content of the practice. The goal of this section is to show how much the practice reflected the intentions of the leadership of Jericho Ministries.

2.2.1. The structural framework of the practice

There are different ways for incarcerated practitioners and volunteers from outside of the prison to register for the Logos Bible Study. If a prison resident wishes to participate in LBS, he must first have made an official declaration of being Christian by registering for a Christian service of worship. As a registered and active practitioner of Christian worship, the person may register for the Logos Bible Study. If a Christian volunteer from the free world wanted to participate in the Logos Bible Study s/he must first make a request to the chaplaincy office at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. Then s/he must pass a criminal background check given by the prison administration. Going through this process invites a civilian volunteer to increase his/her awareness of the American culture of incarceration and to at least consider how his/her participation in this Bible study could in some way help change that culture for the better. After gaining security clearance and learning the curriculum the

volunteer's name is put on a memo granting them entry into the facility for participation in the program.

Like all programs in prison, the Logos Bible study (LBS) has a specific time and place set aside for it. Once a week on Mondays at five o'clock in the afternoon the program is announced through the prison public announcement system. After the announcement is heard on the housing units, those prisoners (between 10 and 20 each cycle on average) whose names are on the registered list of participants in the program are released from their cells and allowed to go to the chapel for the program for a specified period of time.

Once they arrive at the door of the chapel, a correctional officer verifies again that their names are on the Facility Movement Sheet and they are allowed into the chapel. Once inside, the outside Christian participants in the Bible study welcome them. The teaching assistants for the class (detainees who successfully completed the study previously) ensure that everyone has bibles and other materials needed for the session. Then, during a time frame of about 60 to 75 minutes the practitioners of the Logos Bible study perform the following activities.

After a brief period of encouraging conversation and fellowship, everyone takes a seat facing the head facilitator for the session who then leads the group in an opening prayer. Usually it is a prayer of thanksgiving and a request for minds and hearts to be opened to the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the Holy Scriptures. Next, the head facilitator begins the section of the Bible study that is called the Large Group Lecture and Cultural Engagement. Here, the Head Facilitator invites students to read the primary scriptures pertaining to topic for the session. The facilitator uses the "problem-posing" method to bring out the students' understandings of the topic of discussion. During the first 20 to 25 minutes of the session, the

head facilitator gives a brief opening lecture announcing the topic and relevant scriptures and then the other facilitators pose questions to the students and invite the students to pose questions that will lead them to seek God’s revelations on the topic. Afterwards for about 5 to 10 minutes the teaching assistants and facilitators will present an object from popular culture (a video clip, recording, or printed piece of material) and invite the students to analyze the object in light of their conversation on the topic and scriptures of the day.

Next, the class takes 15 to 20 minutes to engage in a section of the study called Small Group Face-to-Face. Here the students split up into groups of four or five. In these groups they are asked questions that give them opportunities to share their own personal perspectives on the topic of the day. There are normally three or four groups and each is led by a facilitator or teaching assistant. After the small group discussion all the students are reminded of their homework (or “Spirit-work”) which are the readings for the next session. They will also be given a list of questions which they should answer before the next session. Everyone then stands and joins hands in a big circle and someone (student, facilitator or teaching assistant) leads the closing prayer.

2.2.2. The content of the practice

Due to its desire for effective Christian discipleship in prison, Jericho Ministries seeks to develop among the practitioners a deeper understanding of the physical realities surrounding the practice and starts that process by offering an orientation before the start of the practice. During orientation the students are told that they are expected to participate in the discussions since the Bible study uses the “problem-posing” teaching technique—a technique that fits the goals of the Bible study for several reasons. The facilitators explain that

the student is not seen simply as an empty vessel to be filled by information from the instructor. Rather, the student is seen as a vessel being filled by God's Holy Spirit and the instructor is used by God to help facilitate that process. Next during the orientation the facilitators tell the students that the Holy Spirit is the teacher, not the facilitator. The facilitator is an enabler of the students in their attempt to discern God's guidance and teaching through the study of the Word of God. Consequently, instead of a "problem-solving," teaching style, where the facilitator would define problems and solutions for students, in LBS the facilitator uses a "problem-posing" method where the students are encouraged to have their voices contribute to the definitions of the issues that challenge them—helping to create opportunities for critical self-reflection and contemplation of one's environment. This class format allows for participants to be frank about how they feel about their lives before and after prison.

After the initial orientation, the practitioners move on to the two initial sessions of the practice, where the students study scriptures that show the differences between divine and human values, and the differences between spirit-centered and self-centered goal-setting. The first session addresses the subject of human and divine values through the study of Proverbs 14:12. It is a review of some values held by human society and how they compare to God's values (Proverbs 14:12). It is a brief review since it is expected that any student who chooses to participate in the class is a Christian who has already come to acknowledge the sinful state of humanity before God and how humans are ultimately dependent on God and lack completion without God (Acts 17:16-28).

During the second session, the students address the distinctions between self-centered and spirit-centered goal setting. In this session, students discuss how to set spiritually

grounded objectives for the four interconnected layers of the human being: body, mind, soul and spirit. In this session, students use the Apostle Paul's words about pressing on "toward the goal of the upward call of Christ" (Philippians 3:14) as a starting point to discuss the creation of future goals that develop the different layers of the self over time. In this session the students are introduced to an exercise that is very important for not only achieving goals but also promoting awareness of one's physical realities. This exercise (one that can be seen as elementary but nevertheless unknown to many of the young adults participating in LBS) is the assessment of one's needs, the creation of goals based on one's needs, the inventory of resources that can help achieve goals and the creation of a schedule for accessing the resources to achieve goals and fulfill needs. This exercise, which can lead to goal achievement, is considered God-centered when it is performed with the intention gaining and maintaining into the future a physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually balanced life-style not only to benefit oneself but also one's community and the kingdom of God.

These first two sessions, plus the third and forth sessions that address Biblical perspectives on the body, help practitioners of the Logos Bible study to contemplate the physical realities surrounding their practice. In the sessions on the Body, the students consider texts like 1 Corinthians 6:13 and 20¹⁴⁵, which inspired the definition of the body used for the class: *"The body is the physical part of a human being. It is the perishable bones, blood and tissues, which form the dwelling place for the human mind and spirit. The body is nourished by water, food, physical exercise and an environment that is materially secure and*

¹⁴⁵ "Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the **body** (**soma**) is...for the Lord and the Lord for the **body**...for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your **body** and in your spirit which are God's."

supportive for growth.”¹⁴⁶ The inclusion of a materially secure and supportive environment as nourishment for the body ensures that the class discussions do not ignore the physical realities of a Bible study in prison.

With its definition of the body, LBS invites the students to open and frank conversation about the physical context of the Bible study. For example, everyone acknowledges that the Bibles used in the study were donated by churches and allowed into the prison as a part of the prison administration’s desire to support religious programming. The students also acknowledge certain potentially discouraging aspects of the prison environment like being in a constant state of hyper-vigilance due to regular threats of violence or the process of having their bodies randomly searched at the end of a Bible study session or being harassed by other detainees on their way to Bible study. In light of these realities there is frank speech about how Bible study in the chapel area is important to help the incarcerated students to experience a physical space where they can receive comforting instruction. Such a physically reassuring space that is established by the first four sessions of LBS can help the students to see those aspects of prison culture they can accept or reject as they intentionally seek ways to use their bodies and physical realities for the good of themselves, their communities and the kingdom of God.

In sessions 5 to 10 of the Logos Bibles Study, the practitioners address scriptural perspectives on three other layers of human life: the mind, the soul and the spirit. It is hoped by the facilitators that use of the problem-posing style of teaching to address these different levels of life will enable the students to gain the opportunity to work with the Holy Spirit and

¹⁴⁶ See Appendix: Logos Bible Study Program, 4.

experience moments of critical reflection which can, despite the challenges of the correctional environment, make the students become more conscious of: who they are; who they can become in Christ; how their community can develop; how their sense of ethics can develop; and how their relationship with God can become more enriching. These goals correspond with the priorities held by Jericho for Christian discipleship in prison and with the reasons that writers like Jean-Guy Nadeau believe inspire the creation of pastoral or salvific practices—*revelations on personal development, community development, ethical behaviors and one's relationship with the Ultimate reality of God.*¹⁴⁷

The LBS emphasizes personal development during sessions 5 and 6 on the mind.¹⁴⁸ The Bible study defines the mind as the collective conscious and subconscious processes in a human being that direct and influence understanding and physical behavior. Learning and meditating on ideas as well as mental exercises like reading, writing, communication and mathematics are examples of things that can nourish the mind. Scriptures like Romans 8:5 and Romans 12:2,¹⁴⁹ guide the conversations and meditations on a person's ability to assess and develop his or her level of education and self-awareness and how such development is within the will of God and it is also one of the officially stated goals of American prison systems.

¹⁴⁷ Jean-Guy Nadeau. "La praxéologie pastorale: faire théologie selon un paradigme praxéologie" *Théologiques* 1/1, (1993), 90.

¹⁴⁸ See Section 2.1.3 and Figures 6 and 7.

¹⁴⁹ Romans 8:5 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit, the things of the spirit." - Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Sessions 7 and 8 of the Logos Bible study demonstrate this pastoral practice's purpose of helping practitioners to encourage the development and support of enriching social and spiritual communities that are governed and maintained by various models for ethical conduct. These sessions present and process Scriptures¹⁵⁰ that support LBS' definition of the soul: *The layer of humanity that is credited with the faculties of emotion, awareness and willpower. It is the immaterial aspect of a human that defines a person's individualism and ability to be in relationship with others. It is influenced by the information received from the body, mind and spirit. The soul is nourished by positive fellowship and communication (including prayer), along with encouraging social and artistic expression.*¹⁵¹ In these sessions, authors like Watchman Nee, are referenced who draw a Biblical distinction between soul and spirit.¹⁵² The practice teaches that the soul is a layer of our selves that can intentionally bring us into or create networks that fortify or weaken our lives. It is the discipline of gaining and maintaining healthy relationships with neighbors and with God that leads the person to control soul-based emotions in ways that help the person to conform to or to create ethical behaviors that reinforce one's character and reputation within communities.

In LBS sessions 9 and 10, the focus is on enhancing the practitioner's relationship with the Ultimate Reality of God. The Spirit is defined as *the immortal, animating force within*

¹⁵⁰ Psalm 143:6 "I spread out my hands to You: My **soul** longs for You like a thirsty land." Acts 4:32 "Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one **soul**; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common."

¹⁵¹ See Appendix: Logos Bible Study Program, 4.

¹⁵² Watchman Nee notes that in the New Testament Greek the word recognized as "soul" is "psuche" (the root of "psyche") and the "Pneuma" refers spirit or breath or wind. For him and for the Logos Bible Study, the spirit is the spark that inspires and guides the soul. See Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, 15-55.

*living beings. It represents a human's "inner being" or essential nature that departs from the body at death. The spirit is nourished by: faith; preparation for the future; creating and practicing a purpose driven lifestyle; and the regular exercise of spiritual disciplines like Bible study, worship, and contemplation of the Divine.*¹⁵³ Scriptures like Psalm 51:10, 1 Corinthians 2:11-12 and 2 Corinthians 4:16¹⁵⁴ guide the discussions during the Bible study from the perspective that the human spirit can be like the unlit wick of a candle—capable of being lit by the Spirit of God or by some other spirits.¹⁵⁵ This section of the prison Bible study sees God from an evangelical Christian perspective where God is the Creator of the Universe and invites humanity into relationship through Jesus Christ by learning about the person and work of Jesus through the testimonies of the Word of God, and by increasing one's knowledge of the world and of self in order to find ways of serving the world in the name of God through various vocations and occupations.¹⁵⁶

At this point, it would be helpful to highlight a few more details about the content of the Logos Bible Study. Each section on the body, mind, soul and spirit is bifurcated so that the first part addresses a subject generally and the second part addresses it practically. For

¹⁵³ See Appendix 5: Logos Bible Study Program, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast **spirit** within me." - I Corinthians 2:11, 12 "For what man knows the things of man except the **spirit** of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the **spirit** of God. Now we have received not the **spirit** of the world but the **spirit** who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." - II Corinthians 4:16 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward nature is perishing, yet the **inner nature** is being renewed day by day."

¹⁵⁵ James Gill, *Temple Maintenance*, 99.

¹⁵⁶ LBS teaches here that a vocation is a calling from God while an occupation can be a form of employment. A person may or may not be employed within his or her calling. Regardless of availability of salary, a spiritual calling demands a response.

example, after studying scriptural perspectives on the mind during the first session, in the second session, the students are challenged to find ways to improve the state of their minds in light of scriptural perspectives by using the exercise in goal-setting and goal achievement.¹⁵⁷ This system makes LBS not only a practice where students deepen their knowledge of scripture but it also is an opportunity for the participants to engage in critical self-reflection as they seek to practically apply scriptural insights for the betterment of their lives, surrounding cultures and communities.

The final two sessions of this prison bible study serve to review the previous 10 sessions and preparation for the final examination. The review and final examination serve not only to help solidify the information received during the practice, they also help the participants (prisoners and free world facilitators) to engage in critical self-reflection and constructive critique of the bible study. The final examination is part of the process of review because it consists of two parts that address the content of the Bible study on theoretical and practical levels. The first part is a review of all the scriptures read and questions posed during the study while the second part pushes the participants to practically apply the information to their lives by instructing them to create a “Logos formula” or plan for gaining and maintaining a healthy body, mind, soul, and spirit over the following year. The participants are invited to use the inspiration of the Bible study to discern for all layers of their lives their needs, goals, resources and action plan for achieving their goals for the betterment of themselves and their communities.

¹⁵⁷ See Appendix: Logos Program, last section.

This is the practice of the Logos Bible Study. In the next chapter I will offer an analysis of the practice through interviews of several of the incarcerated practitioners. We will look at the limits of pastoral praxeology when dealing with the incarcerated environment and an analysis of the data that we were able to gather despite the unique difficulties of doing research in the incarcerated environment—difficulties which shall be outlined.

3. Testimonies about the Logos Bible Study

As discussed in Chapter 1, this research uses Pastoral Praxeology as the primary method for studying the practice of the Logos Bible Study (LBS) at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility in New Jersey. Due to the constraints of the prison, the method had to be modified. This chapter will look at the necessary adjustments that had to be made to the method along with a description of the tools that were used to gather the data and an initial analysis of the data gathered from incarcerated practitioners of LBS.

3.1. Pastoral Praxeology in prison

“Pastoral praxeology is contemplative and critical commentary on a practice or physical action that is targeted for amelioration in terms of relevance, coherence and efficiency. Since it is pastoral, this form of praxeology is interested in those practices motivated by issues that are fundamental to human existence and by the remembrance of the spirit of Jesus Christ.”¹⁵⁸ This quote by Jean Guy Nadeau gives a good introduction to the core elements of this methodology. It enabled me as a prison chaplain to critically reflect on the various religious practices that I must supervise in prison.

Pastoral Praxeology is a hermeneutical approach for studying Christian practices and helping practitioners to become more aware of the reasons and responsibilities for the practice by taking the researcher through five phases. These phases are: observation of the practice; examination of the practice’s strengths and weaknesses within its socio-cultural context;

¹⁵⁸ Jean Guy Nadeau “La praxéologie pastorale: faire théologie selon un paradigme praxéologie,” *Théologiques* 1/1 (1993), 11.

theological analysis of the practice; intervention for improvement of the practice; and projected outcomes of the modified practice. I will go through modified versions of these steps so that the analysis of this practice effectively takes into account how the dynamics of prison Bible study differ from the free world practices of Bible study.

Several authors have recognized the limits of Pastoral Praxeology. In their article “Un Bilan de l’enseignement de la praxéologie pastorale,” Olivier Bauer and Steve Robitaille had the goal of discerning the limits of teaching Pastoral Praxeology at the University of Montreal and while delineating such limits, they also identified some limits of Pastoral Praxeology itself. They observed that the training for the Pastoral Praxeology method can be isolationist.¹⁵⁹ The student of Pastoral Praxeology can be isolated and may not learn how to work within a team of researchers. On his own and without collaboration with other researchers, the student could miss certain essential elements of the practice in question. In addition, the student could offer an intervention to the practice that lacks, ignores or even contradicts those essential elements of the practice.¹⁶⁰ Jean Guy Nadeau has noted those writers who see Pastoral Praxeology as a method that is too “subjective”. The student may be tempted to believe that he has mastered the practice and that his perspective is the only valid one.¹⁶¹ In addition, the student could have ethical concerns if he is participating in a Christian

¹⁵⁹ Olivier Bauer and Steve Robitaille, “Un bilan de l’enseignement de la praxéologie pastorale à la faculté de théologie et de science des religions de l’Université de Montréal.” Université de Montréal, 19 février 2008, 9.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Jean Guy Nadeau, “Pour l’observation praxéologique d’une pratique pastorale en milieu marginal: notes d’éthique et de méthodologie,” *la praxéologie pastorale: orientations et parcours, Part 1. Cahiers d’études pastorales*, 4 (1987), 155, 156.

practice without telling the other participants that he is studying them and their practice.¹⁶² Even though Pastoral Praxeology certainly takes into account the place and social context of a practice, when considering a religious practice in prison, this methodology must face an environment that can actively seek to control or even hinder all observations of all practices and programs within the walls of the prison.

An essential part of Pastoral Praxeology is observation, therefore, how can someone make observations in an institution determined to control all observations? This researcher needed to overcome various administrative obstacles in order to produce the observations used in this study. Indeed, the security requirements of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) necessitated observation techniques that were not preferred by this researcher nor suggested by Pastoral Praxeology. When I initially proposed this research to the NJDOC's Departmental Research Review Board (DRRB), I received the following response that obligated me to change my strategy for observing the Logos Bible Study at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (GSYCF).

¹⁶² Bauer and Robitaille, "Un bilan...", 9.

“After careful review and consideration of the proposed research, the Departmental Research Review Board has decided NOT to recommend approval of your research study. It is departmental policy to prohibit interviews and surveys. In your protocol, you state you intend to have Christian volunteers complete a survey. Specifically, any surveys or interviews (anonymous or not) of correctional staff, either custody, civilian, contracted staff and volunteers are prohibited in the NJ Department of Corrections. This DRRB further feels that there will be a conflict of interest for you to complete this study because of your official position as Chaplain at GSYCF.” (Appendix: Rejection of 980-I, August 2014.)

This was the response to my proposed 980-I protocol, an official request of the NJDOC for permission to do research of any kind in any of its prisons within the state of New Jersey. In the first protocol that I submitted to the DRRB, I offered an observation plan that I believed would satisfy the security concerns of the facility and allow me to utilize the observation techniques suggested by the Pastoral Praxeology method. Jean Guy Nadeau suggests a couple of techniques for ensuring that the researcher is engaging in the active listening and attentive watching necessary for observing a religious practice. Nadeau suggests the Verbatim, relationship maps and non-structured interviews.¹⁶³ My first application to the DRRB proposed methods of data collection that employed to some degree the observation techniques suggested by Nadeau. I will briefly describe those techniques and explain how they were added to the protocol that I proposed the Departmental Research Review Board for New Jersey Prisons.

¹⁶³ Jean Guy Nadeau, “La praxéologie pastorale: faire théologie selon un paradigme praxéologique,” *Théologiques* 4.1 (1993), 89

The Verbatim as described by Nadeau is perhaps one of the best (or at least certainly preferred by this researcher) strategies for observing a religious practice. Nadeau describes the Verbatim as a strategy for collecting data where the researcher participates in an event such as a religious practice or an interview and pays close attention to the event by attentively watching and actively listening. As soon as possible, after the event has been completed, the researcher writes down everything he observed.¹⁶⁴ It would be optimal for the researcher to write his notes the same day as the event—otherwise the next day is possible (with the understanding that the more time passes, the less dependable the memory becomes.¹⁶⁵) If the verbatim is done effectively, it will enable the researcher to create relationship maps that explain all the actors, their relationships to each other and the roles that they played in the event.¹⁶⁶ In addition to getting data from a religious practice, the Verbatim can also be used to gather data from interviews of the primary actors of the practice with no risk of disrupting the activity audio or visual recorders or with pens and paper.¹⁶⁷

My first 980-I application form to the Departmental Research Review Board proposed methods of data collection inspired by the Verbatim technique. One of the first questions posed by the 980-I application form was, “Who are the subjects of this research?” My response to this was “*There are two categories of subjects. The first category consists of inmates at the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility who, between 2010 and 2015, have*

¹⁶⁴ Jean Guy Nadeau, “Pour l’observation praxéologique d’une pratique pastorale en milieu marginal,” 156-157.

¹⁶⁵ Olivier Bauer. “Verbatim.” Praxéologie 1: Observation et analyse en praxéologie. Faculté de théologie et de sciences de religions, Université de Montréal. 05 October 2011. Reading.

¹⁶⁶ Nadeau, “La praxeologie pastorale,” 89.

¹⁶⁷ Bauer, “Verbatim,” 1.

*participated in the Christian practice of Bible Study in one of two classes. The first class is a standard bible study that focuses on the content of the Bible. The second class is a bible study that focuses on the practical application of Bible lessons. The second category consists of Christian volunteers who facilitate the Bible classes are also subjects of this study.”*¹⁶⁸ I also proposed observing and/or interviewing inmates who participated in Bible Study groups of 20 to 30 people each semester from the observation of participants in the Logos Bible Study and observation of those who participated in another Bible Study offered at the prison.¹⁶⁹ I also proposed recruiting anonymous volunteer subjects from among the prison residents and the civilian volunteers who participated in the prison Bible studies by using my access as a Prison Chaplain to make announcements about the research project at the beginning of the sessions for religious programs in order to recruit volunteer subjects from among the incarcerated and the civilians participating in the programs.¹⁷⁰ I had also planned to partake in the Logos Bible Study and in another Bible study at the prison with the goal of interviewing certain participants of the programs and listening to their reasons for participating.¹⁷¹ As per the Verbatim strategy, I would not seek to make any recordings of the Bible instruction practices nor of my interviews with any electronic instruments or with pen or paper. I would simply write my notes from memory once I left the prison. I was confident that this commitment to avoid use of any recording instruments would please the security concerns of the NJDOC. However, as the above quote from the DRRB shows, my original project was rejected. The

¹⁶⁸ See Appendix: “Application Form 980-I to request DRRB review of proposed research protocol.” Section 1a. 6 August 2013.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., section 1d.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., section 2.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

Departmental Review Board told me what it tells all academic researchers: “interviews and surveys of staff and inmates are prohibited.”¹⁷² I could certainly investigate the security reasons for such a policy, but it is outside the scope of this research to trace the origins of this rule. It is more important to note that this policy threatened to bring an end to my project.

Without the authorization of the DRRB, I could not share my experiences of the prison Bible study practice nor share the experiences of Christian inmates and volunteers who study the Bible together within the prison. As Michel Foucault has noted, one of the instruments of power for the prison administration is observation.¹⁷³ Certainly a threat to that power would be perceived if inmates and volunteer staff were able to use a scholarly platform to make their own observations, or if external institutions and researchers could make observations of the inner workings of the prison system free of the supervision of the penal system. I had the challenge of finding a way to obtain permission from the NJDOC to make observations about the religious practice of Bible instruction in prison.

Fortunately, the New Jersey Administrative Code 10A, which governs prisons, states that observations of prison programs in New Jersey are, in fact, allowed to be made by an external agency. NJ Administrative Code 10A:19-3.1 states the following. “*An inmate may be photographed, interviewed, recorded, filmed and/or videotaped by news media representative and/or freelancers: (1) if the inmate has sufficient mental capacity to understand the nature and implication of these activities; 2) if the inmate indicates approval*

¹⁷² New Jersey Department of Corrections. Departmental Research Review Board. NJ.gov. State of New Jersey P, n.d. Web. 01 August 2017. www.NJ.gov/correction/subsites/REU/REU_forms.html

¹⁷³ Michele Foucault. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books (1977), 304.

by signing Form 283-I 'Inmate Consent for the News Media' and; 3) if such activity does not interfere with the security or orderly running of a correctional facility, satellite unit or residential facility.'"¹⁷⁴ In 2007, a freelance reporter with the Word Vision Report, a Christian news agency, had gotten permission from the NJDOC Office of Public Information to come into Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (GSYCF) to record interviews with inmates who participated in any Christian religious practices. World Vision is a Christian Protestant Evangelical organization that was founded in 1950 by Rev. Dr. Bob Pierce, a young pastor and missionary, who had first been sent to China and South Korea in 1947 by the Youth for Christ missionary organization. Pierce remained at the head of World Vision for nearly two decades, but resigned from the organization in 1967. Pierce also founded the evangelical organization Samaritan's Purse. The organization primarily manages programs where people in developed countries can sponsor children in developing countries.¹⁷⁵ It also would work with freelance journalists to publish stories that would bring attention to its work. A freelance reporter offered to do a story about Christian work with oppressed young people in America who are incarcerated. The reporter proposed a story about Christian ministry occurring at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility.

The reporter called my office at the prison and asked me to suggest a religious practice that she should observe. I suggested the Logos Bible Study, simply because I was curious to find out what the residents thought about this relatively new Bible study that, as noted above, was started by Jericho Prison Ministries. The reporter explained that she was authorized by

¹⁷⁴ New Jersey Administrative Code 10A:19-3.1. NJ.gov. State of New Jersey P, n.d. Web. 01 August 2017.

¹⁷⁵ City Vision University. History of World Vision. CityVision.edu. City vision P, n.d. Web. 31 December 2017.

the Office of Public Information to bring a digital voice recorder into GSYCF and interview incarcerated participants of a religious practice. The reporter satisfied the requirements of NJAC 10A:19-3.1 and contacted me in order to select a religious practice and to determine a time for her to come and observe. Sometime after those interviews I was able to acquire a copy of the recorded interviews and I would use them in a second application to the Departmental Research Review Board proposing a modified process for data collection. Before I describe my second application to DRRB, I think it would be helpful to describe the process by which the journalist collected her data.

The reporter arrived at GSYCF one evening during the Fall of 2007. The journalist and her recorder were permitted to enter the facility along with a representative from the NJDOC Office of Public Information. I escorted them to the Chapel. Before the residents arrived we discussed her plan for observing LBS and then interviewing several participants afterward. She did not have her interview questions written out. She expected to simply learn a little about their personal histories and then their reasons for participating in the Logos Bible Study. Looking back on this event I wonder if the reporter used a form of Verbatim. Even though she did not actively participate in the Bible instruction session, she asked me to select four residents to partake in a recorded interview. I chose two young men who were new to the practice and two who had been practicing for a couple of years. Once again, I was hoping to satisfy my curiosity about what the residents were thinking about the practice. I did not know what questions the reporter would ask but I was confident that I would gain new insights from her interviews. The Office of Public Information representative had the men sign the consent form 283-I and then he left the prison with those signed forms. I found a room for the interviews, our “small chapel,” where the four men and the journalist could have their

discussions. This room was normally used for small groups and could fit about 20 people. It had one door with a window in it and one wall that had many mini-windows, all of which allowed for any correctional officer to see into the room when walking by. I left the room to tend to other duties in the “large” or main chapel area. I would return to the room at different points during the interviews to see if any one needed anything. When all of the interviews were completed, the men were sent back to their cells and I escorted the journalist out of the prison at which point she told me that eventually I would have an unedited digital copy of all of all of her conversations with the men.

When I received a copy of the recording, I was able to know the questions that she asked the incarcerated practitioners. Notwithstanding her questions that clarified different points of her conversations with the men, her core questions were the following:

- 1) What is your name and how do you spell it?*
- 2) Why are you here? What is the conviction that brought you to prison?*
- 3) How long will you have to stay in prison?*
- 4) Why do you participate in the Logos Bible Study? What is interesting about it?*
- 5) Where were you raised?*
- 6) Do you participate in other programs at the prison?*
- 7) Does this Bible study help you prepare to return home or does it only help you with life in prison?*
- 8) Would you have participated in a Bible study like this when you were on the streets?*
- 9) How is your experience in this Bible study different from the other experiences you have during a regular day in prison?*
- 10) Is there anything else, that I should ask you that I haven't? Is there anything else that the listeners should know?*

This was the process by which World Vision produced an inspiring report—so inspiring that I decided to continue to invest my time and energy into the Logos Bible Study.

Now I shall describe how that report helped me to get permission from NJDOC to do a research project on the Logos Bible Study.

Since the NJDOC gave permission to the World Vision Report to publish the interviews with the GSYCF inmates, I requested use of the unedited interviews in my second application for the authorization of my research project. I recognized that the questions asked by the reporter gave the residents opportunities to share the underlying values that supported their religious practice. Through her questions I hoped to have access to the framework of the practice (that is to say the who, why, when, where, what and how of the practice).¹⁷⁶ In my second 980-I research proposal to the NJDOC Research Review Board, I wrote that the subjects of my research would include three men who, at the time of the application, were still in the custody of the NJDOC and who participated in published interviews about their involvement in the Logos Bible Study at GSYCF. A fourth man that was also interviewed was already out of the NJDOC's custody so I communicated with him directly to get his consent. In addition to transcribing and studying the interviews, I requested permission to send a follow-up questionnaire in order to give the men the opportunity to reflect on their participation in the Logos Bible Study as well as on their interviews with the reporter from World Vision. These were the follow-up questions:

- 1) *In general, how did you feel about your interview with World Vision Report when it had happened? How do you feel about it now?*
- 2) *In your interview, you described why it was important for you to participate in the Logos Bible Study. Today, do you think the Bible study was important for the same reasons?*

¹⁷⁶ Nadeau, "La praxeologie pastorale," 88.

- 3) *If you currently would modify or add to these reasons why you participated in the Logos Bible Study in 2007, can you please describe those modified or additional reasons here?*
- 4) *During your participation in Logos Bible Study, how many hours per week did you study the Bible? How many hours per week do you study your Bible now?*
- 5) *Do you believe that participating in the Logos Bible Study has influenced your overall behavior and attitudes during your incarceration? If so, how?*
- 6) *Has your practice of Bible study with the Logos program helped you to handle prison life with more courage, confidence and direction? If so, how?*
- 7) *What about the Logos Bible Study helped you to gain and maintain a healthy body, mind, soul and spirit?*
- 8) *Do those lessons from the Logos program on finding in the Bible inspiration for gaining and maintaining “holistic” or complete health still help you today?*
- 9) *What is your definition of gaining a spiritual restoration of your relationship with God?*
- 10) *Has your participation in Bible study increased your level of spiritual restoration? If so, how?*
- 11) *Has your participation in the Logos Bible study helped to increase your interest in educational programs? If so, how?*
- 12) *Has your participation in Logos Bible study helped to increase your interest in enrichment programs that are offered in prison (e.g., Focus on the Victim, Alternatives to Violence Project, Alcoholics/Narcotics Anonymous, etc.)? If so, how?*
- 13) *Do you believe that the Bible Study has helped prepare you to become a responsible citizen in society? If so, how?*
- 14) *In what ways, if any, did the Logos Bible Study help you to prepare for life after you return to society?*

My second application to the NJDOC DRRB was approved: *“Please be advised that Commissioner Lanigan approved [your proposed research project] on December 23, 2014, subsequent to review and recommendation by the NJDOC Research Review Board in*

accordance with NJDOC Policy ADM.001.007...Please make all necessary arrangements to begin the implementation phase of this research. Thank you for your interest in offender research with the New Jersey Department of Corrections. We look forward to facilitating this important research.”

Even though the questions given by the journalist and the follow-up survey questions helped me to make my observations about the framework of the practice of the Logos Bible Study, these questions were far from ideal. A critique of the reporter’s questions and of my own would be appropriate at this point. The questions that were posed by the reporter were questions typical for a popular source of information like a newspaper. Journalistic writing calls for the information in a news article to be organized in descending order with the information that is judged most important to be written first.¹⁷⁷ Unfortunately, this writing style can tempt people to write biased news articles by overemphasizing certain pieces of information over others. Her first questions to the men dealt with their identities and their crimes. In popular culture, the nature of a person’s past crimes can be considered more important than a person’s current activities. While scholarly surveys are based on a review of the literature, the questions posed by the journalist did not reflect a review of any literature.¹⁷⁸ This was evidenced by the fact that the interviewer was not able to research any of her interview subjects beforehand. In addition, she did not offer to the subjects, or to NJDOC any of her questions ahead of the interviews. While she did ask questions that allowed the men to express the values that led them to the practice, she did not ask any questions that explored the

¹⁷⁷ Laura Brown, 373.

¹⁷⁸ Arlene Fink. *The Survey Handbook* (California: Sage Publications, 2003), 11.

efficacy of the framework of the Logos Bible Study. Even though, the reporter witnessed the framework of the practice, she did not question that framework, nor did she give the interviewees an opportunity to make critical reflections about that framework. The follow-up survey that I sent to the men in 2015 had similar shortcomings. Even though the follow-up questionnaire sought to help the men express the values of the practice, it did not allow them to critique the framework of the practice. In addition, the questionnaire had several closed questions as well as open questions—questions that have both limitations and advantages, as argued by scholars like Arlene Fink who teach scholarly writing.¹⁷⁹

The follow-up survey that was sent to the men, certainly had limitations. The open questions were useful to uncover the unknown intricacies of the attitudes of the men toward LBS. “In general, how did you feel about your interview with the World Vision Report when it happened? How do you feel about it now?” This open question had the potential to reveal some interesting and intimate information about the incarcerated practitioners and it allowed the respondents to describe the event as they saw it, not as the reporter saw it. However, the limitation of such a question is that it runs the risk of soliciting responses that are difficult to compare or interpret.¹⁸⁰ The survey also had closed questions that clearly spelled out my expectations. For example, question 6 asked, “Has your practice of Bible study with the Logos program helped you to handle prison life with more courage, confidence and direction? If so, how?” This question, along with questions 7 and 13, are closed questions that did not allow for the respondents to offer their own perceptions in their own language about the

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 17.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

positive (or negative) effects of the Logos Bible Study. This is a common drawback of closed or “leading” questions.¹⁸¹

In summary, the interview questions used by the reporter and by this researcher in the follow-up survey certainly had their shortcomings. Both sets of questions did not address the structural framework of the LBS practice. The reporter’s questions were open-ended, making them potentially difficult to compare and categorize. Also, the reporter’s questions asked about the crimes and identities of the respondents first, potentially overshadowing the rest of the responses. The follow-up questionnaire offered a few leading questions that potentially prevented the respondents from offering their personal perspectives on the practice of Bible instruction and its effects on their lives.

There was indeed cause for concern about my situation as a Chaplain trying to perform an objective study of a program in a prison of which I am an employee. I certainly considered this and find the concern to be valid. I hoped that any bias I may have would be counter balanced by the survey results and the information given by the interviews. I also hoped that any influence I would have over the men would be mitigated by the fact that religious services are not mandatory in the NJDOC even though they are among the rights of the incarcerated. So, the men could have refused participation in the research without the danger of me inhibiting their right to practice their faith. These concerns about my perspectives and biases as a chaplain are very understandable. Nevertheless, by using the method of Pastoral Praxeology I could run the risk of bias with any religious practice that I chose. My goals for the research included recognizing and navigating my biases through those parts of Pastoral

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

Praxeology which require me to listen to the values of the practitioners—the reasons why they participate in the practice—as well as to acknowledge the environment of the practice.

Several things enabled me to fulfill Pastoral Praxeology's requirement of observation of the framework of LBS and the values of the people who practiced it: the description of the Bible study that was written by Jericho Prison Ministries, the recorded interviews with the incarcerated practitioners of the Logos Bible Study and the follow-up survey that was sent to them seven years later. Now that I have shown you the questions answered by incarcerated practitioners, I shall now consider the structural framework of the practice as described by Jericho Ministries, the evangelical group that brought the practice to Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. The framework of the practice along with the testimonies of the incarcerated practitioners will allow me to represent the practice effectively despite my biases. The modification of the observation phase of Pastoral Praxeology was necessary in order to get permission of the prison administration to give me direct access to data from incarcerated men—data that is not often allowed by authorities to leave the prison.

3.2. Testimonies about the Logos Bible Study

As shown in Chapter 2, the participants in this religious practice in prison are incarcerated students, and outside students who also serve as facilitators of the study—the prison chaplain, or chaplain representative, as well as Christian ministers who volunteer their time to the practice. As an evangelical organization seeking new practices of discipleship for prisoners, Jericho Prison Ministries declared that in order to participate in the practice, all of the practitioners are expected to have a declared belief that the Holy Spirit also participates in the practice by revealing to them the presence of God and the instruction of God. Jericho

preferred that the Logos Bible Study be offered to confessing Christians who wish to deepen their knowledge and practice of the faith. Regardless of Jericho's criteria, the administration of GSYCF allowed the Logos Bible Study because it was seen as another program that gave opportunities to inmates to practice their religion.

The relationships between practitioners of Bible study in prison are explained as follows. Chaplains and volunteers offer Bible studies to prisoners. The chaplain works with volunteers to ensure the content of the Bible study. As demonstrated in the creation of the Logos Bible Study (in Chapter 2), the ministers of Jericho Prison Ministries are responsible for supplying the Scriptures to be studied.

The incarcerated practitioners help enhance the practice as their personal testimonies are put into conversation with the Biblical witness. The chaplain ensures that the Bible study occurs in an orderly manner (as is expected of all religious practices in the prison). He also works to bring to a minimum any possible administrative obstacles to religious practice in the prison. The chaplain and volunteers are trying to help incarcerated practitioners to find ways of gaining spiritual awareness in all areas of their lives. By studying the Bible with prisoners, the chaplain and volunteers are themselves enlightened by their testimonies as the prisoners participate in the Bible study and share their opinions on its effectiveness. Figure 8 summarizes the perceived relationships between the practitioners. At this point I will share the testimonies and insights of the young men who were interviewed by the World Vision report that will demonstrate the efficiencies and challenges of their penitentiary Bible study.

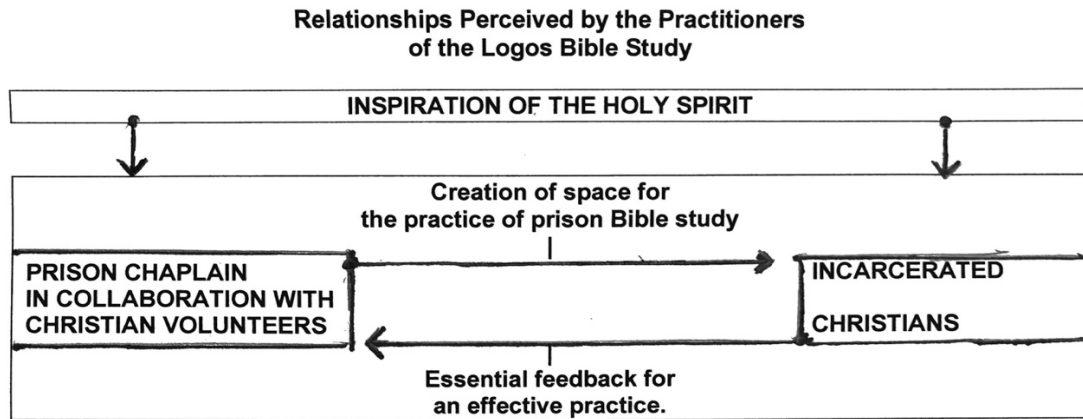


Figure 8. Relationships perceived by the practitioners of the Logos Bible Study

If we look at the transcription of the conversations between the World Vision reporter and the incarcerated practitioners of the Logos Bible Study, we would gain various broad insights into the practice and the practitioners, however, the purpose of this research is to discern the ways in which the practice strengthens or weakens the religion of the actors. Therefore, I needed to categorize the data given through the men's interviews and the follow-up questionnaire. I used a particular social research coding technique for putting the statements made by the men into certain categories that would allow for me to discern if LBS efficiently reflected the underlying values that brought them to this religious practice. I will describe this coding technique (a technique that I had intended to use with my original proposal to survey a hundred inmates) and then use it to explain the data offered by the incarcerated practitioners of the Logos Bible Study.

Content Analysis is a method of data analysis used by social researchers that I considered useful for analyzing the interviews and the survey. Content Analysis is a well-known method of systematic analysis of written or oral material. It is a way of quantifying

what people write and say by coding the material according to “explicit instructions, categorizing the ideas expressed and counting how often certain things are said.”¹⁸² The most important part of content analysis is the creation of the categories of the data since they are the basis upon which much of the analysis will occur. It has been argued that this method is an attempt to quantify the unquantifiable, since a profound reading of the material or a sensitive interpretation of an interview could produce subtleties and nuances that could be missed by overarching categories.¹⁸³ While the interviews and writings of the subjects of this research offer inspirational words that can carry the investigator in various enriching directions, the main purpose of this research to determine the efficiency of a religious practice. The signs of an efficient religious practice recognized by Jean Guy Nadeau could serve as the categories that can measure the effectiveness of the Logos Bible Study.

Of course, other methods for analyzing the interviews could have been used like Conversation Analysis from the field of Ethnomethodology. Since the interviews were recorded, ethnomethodologists could find rich data within the conversations between the World Vision reporter and the incarcerated interviewees. Conversation analysis ideally uses recorded conversations to analyze the competences that underlie ordinary social interactions.¹⁸⁴ However, Conversation Analysis prefers mundane conversations to interactions that have highly intellectual, professional or risky content as one would find in news interviews, courtroom interrogations, classrooms, etc. This is because such

¹⁸² Paul Burstein and Julian Simon, *Basic Research Methods in Social Science*. (New York: Random House, 1985), 193.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ John Heritage, *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), 241.

conversations that involve influential identities narrow the field of conversation to specific or appropriate vocabulary, thereby limiting the expression of those involved.¹⁸⁵ In more mundane conversations, people are able to express themselves more freely and consequently they can reveal more of their competences. Since being interviewed by a journalist while incarcerated is arguably one of the most limiting forms of interaction and self-expression, use of content analysis and the categories offered by Pastoral Praxeology for efficient religious practice will help give an understanding of the efficiency of the practice, while admittedly lacking the material necessary to discern all of the thoughts and attitudes of the interviewees.

Table 1 shows the elements of effective bible study which we will use to create the categories for the Content Analysis of the data from the interviews with several prisoners who participated in the Logos Bible Study. In the left column we see the five general goals of any effective Christian ministry as articulated by Nadeau. While Nadeau and other students of Pastoral Praxeology use these five dynamics as measures of effective practice, for this research I also consider them as objectives for effective religious practice. This is because participants in prison Bible study hope that increased Bible literacy will lead to: first an enriching relationship with God, then, an opportunity to develop oneself, a developed sense of community, the creation of ethical behaviors that support self and community and intentional contemplation of the physical realities of the religious practice. The five elements do not necessarily occur in the order listed—they simply are elements that should be present in order for a ministry to be effective.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 238-239

Using Nadeau's five general functions of religious practice are not enough to perform the Content Analysis of the interview and survey responses of the incarcerated men. There are additional dynamics and perspectives at work within the prison context. It is important at this point to discuss briefly those functions of an effective religious practice that take on additional dimensions in the prison context.

The Logos Bible Study was a religious practice created expressly for the prison environment. As we noted in Chapter 2, the evangelical organization named Jericho Prison Ministries sought to offer a new practice in Christian discipleship for the prison context by combining the evangelical perspective of spiritual anthropology influenced by Watchman Nee, James Loder's perspective of psychological transformation brought on by the Holy Spirit and Paolo Freire's perspective of Liberatory Teaching. The Board of Trustees of Jericho hoped to create a practice of Bible instruction that would enable the practitioners to become strong examples of Christian disciples who were able to acknowledge, address and even transform the harshness of prison life.

It was pivotal therefore that the Logos Bible Study be seen as pertinent to the lives of all the participants, especially the incarcerated. Practitioners of prison Bible study can see their practice as pertinent when the participants believe that they are empowered to create within the territory of punishment a terrain where insightful study of the Scriptures can lead to restorative and critical reflection on oneself regularly so that there is a transformation of one's perspectives on reality that can lead to a shift in priorities and behaviors in incarcerated and free communities. For the leaders of Jericho an area of transformation is produced when practitioners of prison Bible study are empowered to regularly engage the Word of God in the prison context: (1) by promoting personal attitudes of God-consciousness that leads to

sacrificial love, humble hospitality, compassion for others, and trust of self (Loder¹⁸⁶); (2) by recognizing the harsh language of prison culture and encouraging honest conversation about that reality (Friere¹⁸⁷); (3) by encouraging the sharing of personal testimonies and critical reflection on the self in the light of the Scriptures and the witness of carrying the Cross of Christ (Nee¹⁸⁸); and (4) by finding ways to connect incarcerated communities with outside communities of faith in order to engage in conversations about how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in works of reconciliation and transformation within prison culture and in the larger American culture of mass incarceration (Jericho Prison Ministries). If a religious practice is going to be pertinent in prison, then these dynamics need to be at work within Nadeau's five functions of effective religious practice. In the right column of Table 1 those special dynamics are therefore placed alongside Nadeau's five functions in order to demonstrate fully the necessary dynamics of effective prison ministry.

Table 1 will help us analyze the data from the interviews of the detainees who practiced Bible study with the Logos group in prison and to discern the values that guided them to, through and beyond the program. All of the four interviewees, Anthony, Alex, Paul and John, gave responses to the reporter's questions that have been coded through content analysis according to the categories of dynamics of effective religious practice in prison listed in Table 1.

¹⁸⁶ Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 187-188.

¹⁸⁷ Wallerstein, "Problem-posing education," 35-43.

¹⁸⁸ John Wu Dongsheng, *Understanding Watchman Nee: Spirituality, Knowledge and Formation* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 180-199.

Table 1. Elements of Effective Prison Bible Study

GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF EFFECTIVE PASTORAL PRACTICES ACCORDING TO NADEAU	ADDITIONAL DYNAMICS THAT CREATE TERRAINS OF TRANSFORMATION IN PRISON WHICH MAKE PASTORAL PRACTICES EFFECTIVE
1) To deepen one's relationship with God	1) The personal dynamic of actively seeking spirituality or God consciousness
2) To encourage the development of the self	2) The dynamic of engaging in critical self-reflection through: <i>(2a) Reflecting on personal history and sharing of life testimonies</i> <i>(2b) Putting those testimonies in conversation with Biblical testimonies.</i> <i>(2c) Transforming one's meaning perspectives in the light of shared communal and Biblical testimonies</i> <i>(2d) Using transformed perspectives to discern life purpose</i>
3) To develop a sense of community	3) The dynamics of connecting incarcerated and free world communities of faith through: <i>(3a) Intentionally seeking Christian fellowship and assemblies;</i> <i>(3b) Intentional conversations about God's works of redemption, reconciliation & regeneration within particular prison cultures;</i> <i>(3c) Intentional conversations about the God's works of redemption, reconciliation & regeneration within the general American culture of incarceration.</i>
4) To develop a system of ethical behaviors that support self and community.	4) The personal dynamic of gaining and maintaining ethical attitudes and habits of: <i>(4a) Humble hospitality and compassion for others</i> <i>(4b) Belief in (or trust of) oneself to create and develop over time new habits of self-development and of offering an encouraging presence to one's environment (resulting from critical self-reflection and the transformation of meaning perspectives).</i>
5) To encourage contemplation of the physical realities of the religious practice.	5) The dynamic of environmental awareness that: <i>(5a) Acknowledges the difficulties of pastoral practice within harsh prison culture</i> <i>(5b) Explores ways to use transformed perspectives to overcome those harsh realities.</i>

3.2.1. Data results: analysis of interview responses of the practitioners of the Logos Bible Study¹⁸⁹

The ages of the respondents in this study ranged between 20 and 26 at the time of the interview and between 27 and 33 at the time of the follow-up survey. As stated in the interviews, Anthony was incarcerated for robbery and manslaughter. Alex was incarcerated for robbery and aggravated assault. Paul was imprisoned for robbery, aggravated assault, and kidnapping. John was imprisoned for kidnapping and unlawful possession of a weapon. Anthony was serving a 17-year sentence and Paul had a 23-year sentence, while Alex and John were serving 8-year and 12-year sentences respectively. They all were self-declared Christians at the time of the interview.

The responses of the incarcerated practitioners give interesting insights into what they valued about the practice. By using the practices of effective Bible study outlined in Table 1 to interpret the responses of the captive practitioners during their interview we see the following overview of what they valued about the practice.

All of the interviewees gave responses that showed how the Bible study helped satisfy their search for God (Table 1: Goal (1)). All of the incarcerated practitioners valued the opportunity to share with others in the Bible study (and with the interviewer) their personal histories and life testimonies (Table 1: goal (2a)). Only one of the respondents (Paul) mentioned how the class enabled him to put his personal testimony in conversation with Biblical testimonies (Table 1: Goal (2b)): *“I started coming back...taking Bible study and getting with the brothers. And like they say “iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17),” so I just*

¹⁸⁹ Complete interview transcripts and survey results can be seen in Appendix.

started building myself up."¹⁹⁰ Paul describes here his personal discovery of the importance of group Bible study in his life and uses a quote from the Holy Scriptures to describe his journey of enlightenment. All four of the interviewees gave one response during their interviews which demonstrated how personal testimonies that were shared with the group had combined with the Biblical testimonies they were studying and consequently contributed to the transformation of their meaning perspectives (Table 1: Goal (2c)).¹⁹¹ People who have been tried and convicted by the State are quite aware of the importance of written and verbal testimony. Many of the captive practitioners were placed in prison because of testimonies against them and consequently they can have a propensity to pay acute attention to testimony. Paul and the other respondents of this study have shared transformational experiences that resulted from being able to share and discuss Biblical testimonies alongside their own personal ones.

Two of the detainees (Anthony and Alex), gave two responses each, which described how, within the context of the Bible study, they were able to use their transformed meaning perspectives to discern life purpose. The other two men (Paul and John) did not say if the class fulfilled this value in their lives (Table 1: Goal (2d)).¹⁹²

All of the men offered at least one response that confirmed that the Logos study helped satisfy their valued search for Christian fellowship and assemblies (Table 1: Goal (3a)). Two (Anthony and John) offered two responses according to this value while Paul and Alex each

¹⁹⁰ Paul. Interview. *WorldVision Report* Nov. 2007, quote #110. Internet.

¹⁹¹ Anthony, Alex, Paul, John. Interview. *WorldVision Report*, Nov. 2007, quotes #56, #78, #100, #122.

¹⁹² Interview quotes #20, #78, #122, #124.

offered one.¹⁹³ Three of the men said that the practice gave them opportunity to discuss God's works of redemption, regeneration and reconciliation in prison (Anthony, Paul and John). Paul spoke of this benefit twice (Table 1: Goal (3b)).¹⁹⁴ In regard to the benefit of intentional conversations in the Bible study about God's works of redemption, reconciliation and redemption within America's general culture of incarceration, only one student mentioned this (Alex) and he mentioned it twice (Table 1: Goal (3c)).¹⁹⁵

The remaining two functions of ministry according to Nadeau include: developing a system of ethical behaviors that support the development of self and community; and the opportunity for contemplation of the physical realities of the pastoral practice. Within the prison context, two of the students thought that the Logos Bible Study encouraged the attitudes of humble service and compassion toward others—attitudes that supported their transformed meaning perspectives (Table 1: Goal (4a)). One student (Alex) mentioned these attitudes at work twice, while the other (Paul) acknowledged the presence of this dynamic in his practice four times during the interview.¹⁹⁶ All four of the respondents acknowledged the presence within LBS of the dynamic of gaining and expressing belief in oneself to create and develop over time new habits of self-care and engagement of one's environment with an encouraging attitude (Table 1: Goal (4b)). One student (John) referred to this dynamic only once during his interview while two other students (Anthony and Alex) referred to it twice

¹⁹³ Interview quotes #18, 28, 54, 78, 102, 110, 128.

¹⁹⁴ Interview quotes #18, 58, 102, 114.

¹⁹⁵ Interview quotes #132, 133

¹⁹⁶ Interview quotes #80, 100, 104.

during their interviews. This dynamic seemed most important to the final respondent (Paul), who referred to it five times.¹⁹⁷

While all the respondents obviously faced difficulties that were unique to prison while trying to practice Bible study, and thereby had opportunity to contemplate the harsh physical realities of their religious practice, only two mentioned that there was a place for discussing this within LBS (Table 1: Goal (5a)). One student (Alex) mentioned this dynamic three times during his interview while another (John) mentioned it once.¹⁹⁸ Finally, only two of the students (Alex and Paul) mentioned one time during their interviews how LBS enabled them to explore and express ways to use their transformed perspectives to overcome the harsh realities of imprisonment (Table 1: Goal (5b)).¹⁹⁹

Overall, out of the 54 responses recorded by all of the interviewees, the highest numbers of responses recorded along the lines of Nadeau's goals for pastoral practices were the following: deepening one's relationship with God; encouraging the development of self; developing a sense of community; and developing a system of ethical behaviors that support self and community. More specifically, among the dynamics valued by the respondents that can create terrains of transformation in the prison environment and make prison ministries effective, those which were most recognized by the respondents were: actively seeking God consciousness; reflecting on personal histories and sharing of life testimonies; intentionally seeking Christian fellowship and assemblies; and belief in oneself to create and develop over

¹⁹⁷ Interview quotes #18, 26, 64, 82, 102, 104, 110, 116, 118, 135.

¹⁹⁸ Interview quote #84, 128, 130, 132.

¹⁹⁹ Interview quote #132, 135.

time new habits of self-development and of offering an encouraging presence to one's environment.

3.2.2. Data results: follow-up survey of practitioners of the Logos Bible Study

Seven years after being interviewed by World Vision, through the aid of a research assistant, I sent by mail to the same respondents a questionnaire that sought to gather their assessment of the effectiveness of the Logos Bible Study. At the time of the follow-up survey, three of the former practitioners of the Logos Bible Study were still incarcerated and one had been released and deported to Mexico. When my research assistant received the responses, she stripped them of all personal identifiers. Consequently, the respondents were given numbers 1 to 4. The four respondents are R1, R2, R3, and R4.

Table 2. Summary of responses of interviewees as interpreted by practices of an effective prison ministry

DYNAMICS OF AN EFFECTIVE PRISON MINISTRY	R1	R2	R3	R4	TOTALS
1) The personal dynamic of actively seeking spirituality or God consciousness	1	1	1	2	5 ***
2) The dynamic of engaging in critical self-reflection through:					
<i>(2a) Reflecting on personal history and sharing of life testimonies</i>	3	1	3	1	8 ***
<i>(2b) Putting those testimonies in conversation with Biblical testimonies</i>	0	0	1	0	1 *
<i>(2c) Transforming one's meaning perspectives in the light of shared communal and Biblical testimonies</i>	1	1	1	1	4 **
<i>(2d) Using transformed perspectives to discern life purpose</i>	2	2	0	0	4 **
3) The dynamics of connecting incarcerated and free world communities of faith through:					
<i>(3a) Intentionally seeking Christian fellowship and assemblies;</i>	2	1	2	1	6 ***
<i>(3b) Intentional conversations about God's works of redemption, reconciliation & regeneration within particular prison cultures;</i>	1	0	2	1	4 **
<i>(3c) Intentional conversations about the God's works of redemption, reconciliation & regeneration within the general American culture of incarceration.</i>	0	2	0	0	2 *
4) The personal dynamic of gaining and maintaining ethical attitudes and habits of:					
<i>(4a) Humble hospitality and compassion for others</i>	0	2	4	0	6 ***
<i>(4b) Belief in (or trust of) oneself to create and develop over time new habits of self-development and of offering an encouraging presence to one's environment (resulting from critical self-reflection and the transformation of meaning perspectives).</i>	2	2	5	1	10 ***
5) The dynamic of environmental awareness that:					
<i>(5a) Acknowledges the difficulties of pastoral practice within harsh prison culture</i>	0	3	0	1	4 **
<i>(5b) Explores ways to use transformed perspectives to overcome those harsh realities.</i>	0	1	1	0	2 *
TOTALS	12	15	18	9	54

“ * ” = A dynamic which received the fewest number of acknowledgements by practitioners of the Logos Bible Study.

“ ** ” = A dynamic which received moderate amounts of acknowledgement by practitioners of the Logos Bible Study.

“ *** ” = A dynamic which received the highest amounts of acknowledgement by practitioners of the Logos Bible Study.

Table 3. Summary of responses to follow-up questionnaire regarding participation in the Logos Bible Study

EACH RESPONSE TO THE 14 QUESTIONS CAN RECEIVE A SCORE OF 1 TO 5 BASED ON THE NUMBER OF **NADEAU'S ELEMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY (SEE TABLE 1)** THAT ARE PRESENT IN THE RESPONSE.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ELEMENTS PRESENT IN THE RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE 14 QUESTIONS	INTERPRETED VALUE OF THE PRACTICE	THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ELEMENTS FOUND IN THE RESPONSES TO ALL 14 QUESTIONS
1	The practice may have been SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE in helping to develop a person's life.	1 - 14
2 - 4	The practice has been EFFECTIVE in helping a person's process of self-development.	28 - 56
5	The practice was EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE in helping the practitioner's process of self-development.	57 - 70

**RESULTS:
IN HINDSIGHT, HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE LOGOS BIBLE STUDY FOR THE RESPONDENTS?**

RESPONDENT	R1	R2	R3	R4
OVERALL SCORE	47	47	41	40
CATEGORY OF EFFECTIVENESS	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective

Once again Jean Guy Nadeau's five functions of effective ministries were used to interpret the results of the follow up survey, through the base method of Content Analysis. In Table 2, the content of each of the respondent's 14 answers to questions were given a score of one to five depending on how many of Nadeau's functions were mentioned in each response. The scores for each of the questions were then tallied to give overall scores that ranged from 14 to 70 (see Table 3). An overall score of 14 to 27 was interpreted to mean that the Logos Bible Study might have been SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE in the practitioner's life. An overall score of 28 to 42 meant that the respondent in hindsight saw the practice as EFFECTIVE. The score of 43 to 70 was interpreted to mean that the ministry was seen as VERY EFFECTIVE in the life of the respondent.

Tables 2 and 3 show that the Logos Bible Study was especially effective in the lives of Respondents 1 and 2. For Respondents 3 and 4 the practice was also effective. Respondents 1 and 2 had scores of 47 while Respondent 3 had a score of 41 and Respondent 4 scored 40. According to the overall evaluations of the Logos Bible Study, these former practitioners saw it as effective in helping them to transform their perspectives and to face the harsh realities of prison life.

The quote at the end of this chapter from Respondent 1 to question #10 of the questionnaire sums up very well the overall attitude of the respondents as they reflected on their time participating in the Logos Bible Study. Overall they felt that the practice encouraged them and gave them hope, wisdom and strength in a place of condemnation, fear and punishment. Also, the respondents recognized the value of Bible Study—even if they did not currently practice it as often as they would like.

As stated earlier, Table 1 demonstrates the values of those who practice prison Bible study and these objectives for pastoral practices inspired by Nadeau serve to frame the dynamics necessary to create an area of transformation within the oppressive prison environment. According to the interviews and follow-up surveys of former practitioners of the Logos Bible Study, we see that LBS planted and nurtured values that enabled practitioners to overcome the challenges of being in a Bible study group at the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I will offer a theological interpretation and theoretical analysis of the desired and actual effects of the Logos Bible Study. In Chapter 4, I will start with an exegesis of those Scriptures that have been commonly used to justify the practice of Bible study and those Scriptures that have been used as motivation for getting involved in prison ministry. In Chapter 5, I will give a deeper examination of the theological perspective of James Loder and how his view of the transformational logic of the Holy Spirit fit with the desire of the leadership of Jericho Ministries to have a discipleship program that created space for people's minds to be enlightened despite the limits of the mind that are made evident by the works of Paul Ricœur and David Wall on the human capacity to translate knowledge. In Chapter 6, I will use the perspectives offered in Chapters 3 to 5 in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Logos Bible Study and investigate what forms of intervention could make the practice more efficient for the prison context. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will give the reader several lenses with which to interpret quotes like the following as an expression of either a relevant or irrelevant practice in the prison context.

“Bible study keeps me nourished spiritually. It helps me to keep my eyes focused on true reality—God’s reality—and not on the

fallen social constructs (or institutions) of man.

*Regular Bible study continues to give me hope
in the face of pain and suffering. Prison is a horrible place
fraught with a plethora of obstacles specifically designed
to break the will and crush the spirit.*

A regular reading of God's word helps to counteract this."

— Respondent 1, response to question #10 of follow-up questionnaire.

4. Scriptural support for prison ministry

In this chapter I will exegete those Scriptures from the Bible that are often used in the Christian faith to call people to prison ministry and thereby highlight the values and hopes of people (civilian and incarcerated) who participate in religious practice in prison. Since the Logos Bible Study was started by a Protestant neo-evangelical group—Jericho Prison Ministries—it would be also helpful to exegete certain Scriptures that have been used historically by Protestants to emphasize the importance of studying Scripture in the process of Christian discipleship.

4.1. “The least of these:” Matthew 25:34-40

The Gospel of Saint Matthew holds a verse that has been historically interpreted by Christians as a call to prison ministry. Many Bible scholars have posited that this Gospel was written around 90 AD/CE by an unknown Christian from a church in or near Antioch of Syria.²⁰⁰ The central message of Matthew’s Gospel is that Jesus, the Son of God, has arrived to begin his eschatological rule with his church. According to Matthew, the Gospel promotes this message by inviting readers and hearers to become disciples of his end-time rule and to participate in its mission to the ends of the Earth so that the whole world may find God in Jesus and become disciples.²⁰¹ Matthew chapter 25:34-46 describes the final judgment of humanity and delineates those behaviors of a disciple of Christ who will not be condemned at the judgment. Matthew 25:34-46 is also a narrative that Jesus uses to acknowledge that the

²⁰⁰ Paul Achtemeier, “Introduction to the Gospel according to Matthew,” *HarperCollins Study Bible-NRSV* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 661.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 661-662.

“kingdom of God” or the rule of God is a future hope that is distant from the everyday reality of suffering and oppression to which the people of God are subjected.²⁰² We see this perspective (a perspective held by many prison ministers) at work in verses 34 to 40.

Jesus acknowledges in Matthew 25:34-40 that all those who are a part of his “family” can experience being the “least” in society: they can be poor, hungry, thirsty, sick and incarcerated. The true representatives of God’s kingdom who will enter God’s glory are those who met the needs of the “least of these.” Ελαχιστως in verse 40 refers to those people who can be seen in a society (in this case within the Christian fellowship) as having little importance or authority.²⁰³ Many people involved in prison chaplaincy believe that in Christ’s kingdom, all people are to be served and comforted—even the incarcerated, who are typically marginalized in society.²⁰⁴ In their very insightful book, *The Work of the Chaplain*,¹ Paget and McCormack offer strong reasons why Christians get involved in prison chaplaincy, such as following the call of Isaiah 61:1 that was echoed by Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 “to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners.” Christians who enter prisons for prison ministry feel called to offer a comforting presence to those who are marginalized in society and who must face the stressful life of incarceration separate from their families.²⁰⁵ As someone who has worked in prison

²⁰² Stephen Westerholm, “Matthew,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible: One Volume Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 630.

²⁰³ Wesley J. Perschbacher, editor, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 133.

²⁰⁴ Naomi K. Paget and Janet R. McCormack, *The Work of the Chaplain* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2006), 62.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

chaplaincy for over 20 years I find that these reasons for getting involved correspond with many of my own. My experience also brings to light some other reasons for prison ministry that were not brought out by Paget and McCormack. I will share my experience of Jesus calling for me to serve the incarcerated of his “family” because it may enhance the understanding of why Matthew 25:34-40 is so important to Christian prison chaplains.

My experience mentioned in Chapter 2 with the Young Long Termers at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility informed my conversation with the leadership of Jericho Ministries and formed the foundation of my personal commitment to prison chaplaincy. In the Fall of 1997, I started a student internship in the chapel at GSYCF and one of my assignments, along with another intern, was as facilitator of the Young Long Termer Self-Development program. During the first week of the program in a group exercise, all of the participants, including the facilitators, were invited to share why we were involved in the program. When it was our turn to share our thoughts, my fellow intern cited Matthew 25:34-40 as his main reason for doing prison ministry. In reaction, one of the incarcerated students said something that left my colleague silent. He said, “So, according to that Scripture, you are not here for us. You are here so that you can get into heaven!” The young man’s statement made me look again at that text—a text in which Matthew places a call for members of the church to serve “the least of these,” within the larger context of final judgment. Since the narrative states that those who go to live in glory with God are the ones who serve the “least of these,” it is easy for someone to believe that if a person wants to go to heaven, then that person must participate in the work of serving these people. While my colleague sat speechless, I was challenging myself with the question: “Was I in prison only for the self-centered reason of getting myself into heaven?” I could not believe that my reasoning was as simple as that, so I searched my

mind for the theologians who I felt could offer an interpretation of a Scripture like Matthew 25 that would best describe the unselfish call that I felt toward prison ministry. During the time of my prison chaplaincy internship, I had not yet discovered James Loder (a major influence on the Logos Bible Study), however I was reading someone who would orient my thinking in a way that would cause me to value Loder's work on transformational education: the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In his book entitled *The Strength to Love* (a collection of his published essays and sermons), there is one sermon that touched my heart in an exceptional way. The sermon was titled, "The Transformed Nonconformist." One of the main arguments that he put forth in this sermon became for me both an effective response to the young man's question and a foundational reason for my involvement in prison ministry.

According to King, a "transformed nonconformist" is a person who has experienced "inner spiritual transformation" and consequently, for altruistic reasons, the person refuses to conform to societal behaviors that normalize oppression and cruelty.²⁰⁶ In his sermon, King comments on Matthew 25:40 in a way that expresses very well my heart-felt reasons for doing prison ministry. "When we, through compassionless detachment and arrogant individualism, fail to respond to the needs of the underprivileged, the Master says, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brothers, ye have done it to me.'²⁰⁷ While Paget offered that Matthew 25:40 was a call to serve all those in need,²⁰⁸ King proposed (not only in this essay but also in his larger work for civil rights in America) that through Christ we are all connected and by helping others with compassion, no one is left abandoned and alone.

²⁰⁶ Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Strength to Love* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2010), 17, 18.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁰⁸ Paget, 5.

Through Christ we see ourselves in the needs of others and through Him they can identify with us. After considering such things, I was able to give a response to the young incarcerated student that demonstrated to him and to myself that I was not simply trying to “get into heaven.” My response was an important personal interpretation of Matthew 25:34-40—an interpretation that reflected a desire of my heart that would grow into my commitment to prison ministry. I told him my interpretation of the Scripture and my reason for participating in prison ministry. I came into prison because through Christ I saw myself as connected to him and as a help to him. I also hoped that he could see himself as connected to me and as a help to me. This perspective, informed by King, joins other interpretations of Matthew 25:34-40 which call all Christians to participate in or at least recognize the importance of prison ministry.

4.2. “The prisoners were listening to them:” Acts 16:16-40

Another Scripture that has been historically used to show the importance of prison ministry is the account of the incarceration of Paul and Silas in Acts 16:16-40. Paul exorcised a spirit of divination out of a woman who “brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling.” (NRSV) In reaction, the woman’s owners brought Paul and Silas to the magistrate of Philippi and had them beaten and placed “securely” in prison where they were put in the “innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.” Despite the discomfort, around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and had the prisoners listening to them. Suddenly, there was an earthquake that opened all the doors and unfastened everyone’s chains. However, none of the prisoners attempted to escape and together they prevented the jailer from committing suicide (since he thought everyone had escaped). By the

end of the account, Paul and Silas are released and the jailer, along with his family, are baptized as disciples of Christ.

Many commentators on the Book of Acts have agreed that it has the same author as the Gospel of Saint Luke and has as its mission to trace the church in its growth toward following the mission of Jesus.²⁰⁹ Indeed Biblical Scholars like Beverly Gaventa have underscored the connections between Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. She has noted that both books emphasize the reliability of God's word "from the annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:35) to the mission of the church (Acts 1:8) to Paul's journey to Rome."²¹⁰ According to Gaventa, the Book of Acts tries to demonstrate that, the word of God is so powerful that, instead of rescuing Paul and Silas from prison, we see the word of God working through Paul and Silas to "rescue" the other prisoners, the jailer and his family.²¹¹ Just like Luke portrayed in the Gospel the work of Jesus, Luke also shows through the account of Paul and Silas in prison that Christ's work of comforting and rescuing souls continues through the church in any location—even in prison.

In addition to Acts 16:16-40 being a strong example of the word of God at work in prison ministry, it also offers an example of God not only encouraging hearts but also transforming places of punishment into places of worship. This is Jens Soering's main point about this text. He would agree with the perspective of Gaventa regarding how the prison

²⁰⁹ Joel B. Green, "Acts," *The New Interpreter's Bible: Single Volume Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 735.

²¹⁰ Beverly R. Gaventa, "Acts: Introduction", *HarperCollins Study Bible-NRSV* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 2058.

²¹¹ Beverly R. Gaventa, *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: The Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 3918.

ministry of Paul and Silas encouraged the other prisoners and rescued their jailer. In addition, Soering's view takes into account the place of punishment itself and its transformation. What does a prison become once it no longer has the attributes of a prison? This is the question posed by Soering.²¹² Being himself a prisoner at the time of his writing, Soering brings unique perspectives to the text of Acts 16:16-40. In addition to the effects of prison ministry on human hearts, Soering looks at the effects of prison ministry on the culture of incarceration.

Acts 16:25 reads: "About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoners were listening to them." "ἐπηκροῶντο" or "ἐπηκρωαομαι" means to listen attentively and intentionally. One of the things that I have noticed in prison—something of which Soering is certainly cognizant—is the amount of noise.²¹³ There are sounds of people talking, working, suffering, or laughing at all times of day and night. Even though this is not necessarily the conditions of this particular prison in Philippi, by being incarcerated "securely" with their feet in stocks within the "inner" part of the prison with probably little to no sunlight, one can be certain that they were in a place of severe punishment where the prisoners could have been focusing on many sounds, situations and emotions. For the prisoners to have been listening to Paul and Silas, they had to intentionally choose to focus on the ministry of these two men. They were so focused that they stopped participating in their prison culture, in order to pay attention to the encouraging message of the Gospel. The prisoners started by listening to the Gospel and then began to participate in it when they chose not to escape once their cell doors were opened. Instead of participating in a prison culture by

²¹² Jens Soering, *The Church of the Second Chance*, 216.

²¹³ Spitale also writes about this in his description of the harsh environment of prison in *Prison Ministry*, 88-89.

acting mainly out of self-interest, they helped Paul stop the jailer from killing himself. At that moment, Soering argues, the culture of incarceration that normally is an environment where prisoners selfishly fight against each other and against the penal institution and where escape is a constant desire, this culture was transformed into a culture of illumination, worship and salvation.²¹⁴

Soering asks, “if criminals stop thinking and acting criminally, who needs penitentiaries?”²¹⁵ This incarcerated theologian is offering a perspective that helps distinguish Acts 16 as a fundamental text for prison ministry. He argues that the text demonstrates how prison ministry can transform the assumptions and perceptions of prisoners and jailers, thereby changing the culture of the prison and the prison itself. It is commonly understood that sound is an important part of the culture of a particular space. In the middle of the first night of their incarceration (and torture), Paul and Silas influence the culture of the inner prison by praying and singing spiritual songs out loud. Classic Protestant theologian John Calvin notes that by praying and singing out loud, Paul and Silas were helping the listening prisoners “to prepare their hearts” to interpret the miraculous earthquake that would come shake the foundations of the prison and free the prisoners of their shackles.²¹⁶ Soering would argue that because the prisoners took to heart what they were hearing, their hearts were changed and they did not interpret the earthquake as simply an opportunity for escape. Rather, they interpreted it as a sign of the presence of God and as an opportunity for their salvation and the salvation of their

²¹⁴ Soering, 215, 216.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 216.

²¹⁶ John Calvin, *Commentary on Acts of the Apostles*, Alister McGrath & J.I. Packer Trans. (England: Crossway Books, 1995), 274.

jailer.²¹⁷ For all those participating in the work of proclaiming and receiving the Gospel in Acts 16, a place of punishment and pain was transformed into a place of divine illumination, revelation and comfort.

Acts 16 also highlights the importance of ministry from within the prison. As discussed in Chapter one of this dissertation, there are many strong arguments for efforts to reform the prison system primarily through the people and policies that shape the system. Why go into prison for worship when the forces that can change it need to be engaged on political levels? In his book, *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*, Mark Taylor expresses a perspective shared by many theologians who consider the American incarceration system. Much like Michel Foucault, Taylor sees an incarceration system as the product of penal philosophies that reflect those cultural perspectives on humanity, which are held by the political leaders of a nation. For Taylor, what is needed to transform the American system of mass incarceration is for churches to engage in “adversarial politics” through sound movements that challenge the United States’ “imperial power structure” with alternative political strategies and social power structures.²¹⁸ While many prison ministries may acknowledge and even participate in such movements, they are also touched by the call of Acts 16 to enter into prison and conduct ministry there. Soering posits that those interested in helping prisoners are certainly encouraged to engage the political structures that have established the prison system, but it is also important to recognize the “guiding principle” offered by Paul and Silas for changing life behind bars: “ministers and teachers can not just

²¹⁷ Soering, 216.

²¹⁸ Mark Taylor, *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 155-163.

swoop in, deliver their sermon or lesson, and then depart. To some extent, they have to join the convicts in their lives and enter into their painful, lonely existence.”²¹⁹ Paul and Silas inspired the idea that it is important to reach the jailed and the jailers with the Gospel message. While prison culture can certainly be molded by political culture, those living within the prison culture can also be inspired and encouraged to transform the culture. The jailer, who was severe in his punishment of inmates (and of himself once he thought that they had escaped), changed his thinking about prison and prisoners when he invited two of them—Paul and Silas—to his home where he washed their wounds and fed them. The other residents of the prison changed their thinking about themselves, about the prison and about the jailer, when they received the ministry of Paul and Silas and then participated in it by not escaping the jail and stopping their jailer from committing suicide.²²⁰ Since both the jailer and the prison residents did things that were counter to prison culture and transformed the culture without using political pressure, Acts 16 inspired Christians to hope that prison ministry can cause some positive change in the Prison, with or without political support.

Of the different forms of prison ministry that exist, this research focuses on the practice of Bible study and at this point it would be helpful to review those scriptures that have motivated neo-evangelical groups like Jericho Prison Ministries to create the Logos Bible Study as a Christian discipleship program. Neo-Evangelicals, as described by McKim, believe that the primary function of scripture is to bring people to faith and salvation in Jesus

²¹⁹ Soering, 216.

²²⁰ Ibid.

Christ.²²¹ Therefore, as mentioned in chapter two of this research, for groups like Jericho Ministries, the Bible is authoritative and should be read and taught with the aid of the Holy Spirit who “witnesses that the Scriptures are the Word of God.”²²² The Jericho leadership would feel supported in this perspective when reading commentaries from ancient theologians like Athanasius to classic theologians like John Calvin and Matthew Henry to modern theologians like Rolf Jacobson who all acknowledge that Scriptures like Psalm 1:1-2 emphasize the importance of studying the Word—receiving God’s instruction (or “torah” as described by Jacobson) in order to gain freedom and fruitfulness on spiritual and societal levels.²²³ Yet in order for the witness of Scripture to be received, it must be understood by the Bible student. Therefore, Scriptures like Psalm 1, led Jericho Ministries to design a Bible study that was understandable and relatable to the incarcerated and thereby offer an opportunity for the “renewal” of the mind as mentioned in Romans 12:1-2. I shall now exegete Romans 12:1-2 since I will return to it as an important reference for analyzing the critical reflections of those incarcerated participants of the Logos Bible Study who were interviewed for this research.

²²¹ Donald McKim, *The Bible in Theology and Preaching*, 94.

²²² Ibid., 95.

²²³ Peter Leithart, Athanasius : “Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality”. (Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Academic 2011) <http://www.bible.ca/sola-scriptura-apostolic-fathers-athanasius.htm>. 8 March 2018; Rolf Jacobson, , « The Psalms », *The New Interpreter’s Bible: One Volume Commentary*, Beverly Gaventa et David Petersen (Eds.) (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 310; Jean Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. (Peabody, MA : Hendrickson Publishers 2008); Matthew Henry. *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991).

4.3. “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind:”

Romans 12:1-2

Paul’s letter to the church in Rome offers many Christian doctrinal and theological teachings that neo-evangelical groups like Jericho Prison Ministries have used in support of Bible teachings in prison. Romans 12:1-2 is used in the Logos Bible Study section on the “mind” and, since LBS focuses on how the mind and its capacity for understanding can be transformed by the Holy Spirit, it is important to consider more closely Romans 12:1-2 and the neo-evangelical perspective on it.

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [or reasonable] worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” — Romans 12:1-2 (NRSV)

As a Pharisee turned Christian, Paul wrote these and many other words of encouragement and guidance to the church in Rome. When Paul sent this epistle, he was facing at least two opposing perspectives of the Gospel message he preached. The Judeans, Jewish Christians who doubted the validity of the Gentile churches that Paul served because they were unfamiliar with Jewish customs and traditions, held one perspective. Holding the opposing perspective were those Gentile Christians in Rome and elsewhere who had growing doubts about the validity of Israel in God’s purpose.²²⁴

²²⁴ Leander E. Keck, “Introduction to the Letter of Paul to the Romans,” *The HarperCollins Study Bible—NRSV*, Wayne Meeks, editor (London: HarperCollins, 1993), 2113.

In his applauded work on Romans, Philip Esler notes that in Romans 12:1-2, Paul invites Judean and non-Judean audiences to come together and adopt a Christian group identity.²²⁵ By writing “present your bodies as a living sacrifice”, Paul is exhorting the Judeans, who had the traditional practice of sacrificing dead animals, to consider sacrificing their living bodies to the service of the Gospel. Such a sacrifice would be a demonstration of their commitment of heart and mind to the Christian group identity that Paul worked to convince people to adopt through a process of psychological re-categorization. Since Judeans were very concerned with worship, Paul offered that such a sacrifice was λογικη or rational.²²⁶ While sometimes λογικη can be translated as “spiritual,” a more appropriate translation here would be “rational” or “reasonable,”²²⁷ because in the larger context of Romans 12 we see Paul addressing the cognitive dimension of Christian identity—an identity initiated by the “renewal” of the mind. Paul seems to directly address the non-Judean readers and hearers of his letter with his call for people to resist conforming to the people and powers of the world or of this “age” or αιων. While certain versions of the Bible translate αιων as “world,” it should not be exclusively interpreted as referring to all human societies created on the planet Earth in general. The Greek word αιων can also have more specific connotations. It can refer to “a period of time that is of significant character” or to “a state of things marking an age or an era.”²²⁸ For Esler, αιων is very important for Paul to acknowledge because the Christian

²²⁵ Philip Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: the social setting of Paul's letter* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003), 309.

²²⁶ Ibid., 309, 310.

²²⁷ See the King James Version of Romans 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

²²⁸ Perschbacher, 10.

identity into which he encouraged Gentiles to re-categorize themselves was in opposition to a time period and realm inhabited by persons and powers who were committed to violent ethnic conflict and idolatry.²²⁹

In order for both Judeans and non-Judeans to receive Christian identity they needed to renew their minds or νοῦς. The νοῦς is translated as “mind, intellect, judgment and understanding.”²³⁰ If a person receives an augmentation of her understanding through the acceptance of Christian identity, then that person is able to discern the will of God in his life.²³¹ Esler offers a strong argument for Paul seeking to bring together Jewish and Gentile Christians with writings like Romans 12 that call for a renewed mind that can discern God’s will and recognize that all are one in Christ. With a renewed mind one gains the fundamental attitudes and processes of identity in Christ that will “connect the lives of Roman believers with God and will lead to their demonstrating the divine will in their daily existence.”²³²

While Esler, a professor of Biblical Criticism, borrows from the field of social psychology the theories of social identity and self-categorization in order to describe the dynamics that created the community of Roman Christians to whom Paul was addressing his letter,²³³ A. Katherine Grieb and Walter Brueggemann, professors of New and Old Testament respectively, describe another dynamic that would explain well the perspectives on

²²⁹ Esler, 310.

²³⁰ Perschbacher, 286.

²³¹ Esler, 311.

²³² Ibid., 312

²³³ “Self categorization theory postulates a fairly mobile sense of self, with different situations leading to personal and/or group-derived characteristics become dominant for a time...Social identity theory [has a] focus on intragroup processes [of identity creation and support.]” Esler, 25-27.

Romans 12:1-2 that are held by Bible study practitioners at the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. Brueggemann proposes a dynamic in society where people's imaginations accept and participate in certain stories, renderings or translations of reality. Brueggemann argues that many people live by stories that are formed from perceptions and values that are taught by families, communities and governments. People commit their hearts to varying renderings of reality that succeed in capturing their imaginations. By telling and re-telling the Bible narratives, the evangelist hopes to give people opportunities to switch their commitments from the stories they hold to the story of the Gospel.²³⁴ Brueggemann is known for promoting plurality in biblical interpretations so that ultimately a "meta-narrative of the truth" would win over the life of a person or of a people.²³⁵ Jon Levenson offers an important critique of Brueggemann that would be helpful to note here since the Logos Bible Study offers the Gospel as that "meta-narrative," as does Brueggemann. Levenson states that even though Brueggemann's call for diversity in interpretations of Scriptures is hopeful, it is biased toward Christianity and is not as pluralistic as one would hope. Levenson argues that Brueggemann assumes that Christian interpretations would win an open competition of interpretations in which Brueggemann would not include every interpretation and thereby Brueggemann creates what he is trying to avoid—hegemonic interpretation.²³⁶ Nevertheless, Grieb uses Brueggemann's description of this societal dynamic of competing narratives in order to build her commentary on Romans 12:1-2. Grieb argues that in order to understand Paul's letter to

²³⁴ Walter Brueggemann, *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-storied Universe* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 8.

²³⁵ Jon D. Levenson, "Is Brueggemann Really a Pluralist?" *Harvard Theological Review* 93.3 (July 2000), 266.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 267, 294.

the church, one must understand that the competition to capture a person's imagination is a powerful dynamic at work in society.²³⁷ Grieb agrees with Brueggemann that evangelism is an invitation and a summons to “switch stories” and thereby change lives.²³⁸ The evangelist must, like Paul, have confidence that the biblical text is strong enough to support a person's counter cultural imagination.²³⁹ The work of Grieb and Brueggemann has offered quite an impressive perspective on evangelism. Later in this research (Chapter 6), I will discuss another perspective on evangelism—a perspective of translation and transformational education—that arguably builds upon the perspectives of Brueggemann and Grieb on the social dynamic of adopting stories.

According to Grieb, Paul's letter to the Roman church fuels the counter-imagination of his audience and from this perspective she builds her comments on Romans 12:1-2. According to her, Paul tells the story of Christ in the hope of encouraging people to adopt this translation of reality as their own. For Paul, the evidence of the acceptance of the story of Jesus is a “new life in Christ” –a life in which the actions of one's body demonstrate the Lordship of Christ.²⁴⁰ Romans 12:1-2 develops further the argument offered by Paul in Romans 8:6 where he declares that a person who has set his mind on the Spirit has “life and peace” because a community of minds that are renewed to conform to the story of Christ would follow the recommendations for peaceful actions and attitudes that are delineated in

²³⁷ A. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God's Righteousness* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002), xxii.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 119-120.

Romans chapter 12.²⁴¹ Grieb sees Paul inviting the Roman church to respond to the difficult conditions of daily life by conforming their minds to the mind of Christ instead of the mind of Adam. Within the Roman culture of the time, a Christ-conformed community would demonstrate the “renewal of the mind as a reversal of the characteristics of Adamic existence” which is a fallen existence symbolized in Rome by idolatry, immorality and ethnic violence.²⁴² The story of Christ, once accepted by a community in Rome, creates a culture that stands against the dominant culture—not seeking to violently replace it but to peacefully transform it through practices of reasonable worship where a person submits to the discernment and performance of God’s will in daily life.

This perspective builds on the long history of commentaries on Romans 12:1-2. From antiquity we have seen Origen state that the “mind is renewed by the practice of wisdom and reflection on the Word of God and the spiritual understanding of his law.”²⁴³ According to Origen, Paul taught through Romans 12 that since every soul at one time had the form of wickedness (demonstrated through actions and attitudes), then every mind needs renewal by God. Renewal by God conforms a person to the image of God and allows him to tell whether what he thinks, says or does at certain moments is within or outside of the will of God.²⁴⁴ While Origen simply says that the Holy Spirit is responsible for this process, Grieb describes the operation in more detail by positing that the Holy Spirit inspires a person to submit his

²⁴¹ Ibid., 120.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Gerald Bray, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 308.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

imagination to a Christ-centered translation of reality and that submission is made evident by the person's actions and attitudes in everyday life.

From among the classic leaders of Protestantism who inspired the work and influenced the perspectives of organizations like Jericho, we see John Calvin saying that when we put on a new mind, we bid “adieu” to our own counsels and desires.²⁴⁵ Also, we see Matthew Henry saying in his devotional commentary that it is God who renews our minds and that process transforms us and causes us to frame what we do within that spiritual transformation. Our lives are called to move within the wisdom of God that is translated for us in the life of Christ.²⁴⁶ American theologians and preachers like Martin Luther King, Jr. have described a “transformed nonconformist” as someone who boldly stands apart from the story of society while submitting to the story of Christ.²⁴⁷ All of these and other theologians were influential in the creation of the underlying values and hopes of Christian organizations like Jericho Prison Ministries in regard to their Christian discipleship practices in prisons. Jericho Ministries offered the Logos Bible Study in order to participate in what the Jericho Leadership considered to be God's work of offering a Christ-centered translation of reality that was strong enough to support prisoners in conforming their imaginations, attitudes and behaviors to Christ thereby making them people who stand in contradiction to the oppressive and dehumanizing culture of prison.

In his influential research on the New Testament, Luke T. Johnson also adds to the rich history of commentaries on Romans 12:1-2 in addition to summarizing the values and hopes

²⁴⁵ John Calvin, *The Complete Biblical Commentary Collection of John Calvin*, (Kindle edition), Romans 12:1-2.

²⁴⁶ Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 222.

²⁴⁷ Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love*, 17-20.

of Jericho Prison Ministries and the practitioners of its Logos Bible Study. According to Johnson, Paul, through Romans 12:1-2, declares that the Holy Spirit gives people the capacity to “measure reality differently than by the measure of the world, and to discern in concrete circumstances the appropriate response by which God will be praised.”²⁴⁸ Jericho Ministries sought to create a Bible study that would offer its practitioners—especially the incarcerated ones—the opportunity to study the story of Christ and to adopt a translation of reality that would lead them to develop attitudes and behaviors that enable them to resist contributing to the violence and oppression of prison culture.

The spiritually inspired renewal of the mind presented by Paul is a process where the incarcerated practitioner in the context of the Logos Bible Study submits his imagination to the story of Christ, making it the primary story of his life. Once a person’s imagination has been captured for Christ, it is the hope of Jericho Ministries that the person would use those newly accepted measures of reality to stand against the harsh realities of daily life in prison and to seek other scriptures that reinforce the belief that Biblical narratives can express and inform one’s personal life within the prison system.

4.4. “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed:”

2 Corinthians 4:7-11

To someone with a “renewed mind” Scriptures like Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 4, verses 7 to 11, are seen as words that speak to the personal life of an incarcerated person who has adopted Christian renderings of reality. The person who has

²⁴⁸ Luke T. Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 334.

submitted his imagination to the narrative of the Gospel, uses a “renewed mind” to interpret scriptures like 2 Corinthians 4:7-11 as confirmation that the soul can find strength in the midst of affliction for the glory of God.

“⁷ But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹ For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.” — 2 Corinthians 4:7-11

Since Paul made the Gospel of Jesus Christ the primary story of his own life, he continued to share the Good News despite all forms of trials and tribulations while many of his challenges are recounted in the book of the Acts of the Apostles—Scriptures like 2 Corinthians 4:7-11—reflect his attitude during those tribulations. Through the many commentaries that exist on Paul’s letters to the church in Corinth, we know that the letters address primarily Gentiles who lived in a culturally diverse city. Paul founded the church in Corinth and continued corresponding with them after he left through the First and Second Letters and possibly other letters that are no longer extant. While there are many debates about whether 2 Corinthians is one, two or more letters,²⁴⁹ there is general agreement that 2 Corinthians, like Paul’s first letter to Corinth, seeks to respond to certain difficult and confusing situations that were arising out of the Corinthian Christian fellowship. In response,

²⁴⁹ A good summary of four theories about the nature and sequence Paul’s correspondence with the church in Corinth is done by John T. Fitzgerald, “Introduction to the 2nd Letter of Paul to the Corinthians,” *The HarperCollins Study Bible-NRSV* (New York: HarperCollins (1993), 2165.

Paul sends letters of encouragement to Corinth—letters that present his life experiences as proof that God can help them overcome the intragroup and intergroup challenges that they face.

In 2 Corinthians 4:7-11, Paul offers that because of the renewed mind and perspectives that God gave him, he does not stop proclaiming the Gospel, despite facing repeatedly physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual attacks. He is a servant of Christ and as such he will not stop preaching and teaching. Paul states that these afflictions are rooted in the weakness of humanity and will never go away. These human challenges persist in order to persistently reveal the power of God that continues to do great works through weak human vessels. Therefore, “God, not man, is glorified, as God’s grace spreads and thanksgiving to him is increased.”²⁵⁰ Often Paul may feel physically and emotionally θλίβω (pressed or compressed); ἀπορέω (without resources or unclear which way to turn); διώκω (pursued and persecuted); and καταβάλλω (cast down and thrown to the ground). Despite these stresses, he is neither στενοχωρία (distressed); nor ἐξαπορέομα (utterly destitute and without all hope); nor ἐγκαταλείπω (abandoned or helpless); nor ἀπόλλυμι (destroyed, ruined or useless).²⁵¹ In other words, his internal and external limitations cannot stop the work of God within him or around him.

Incarcerated practitioners of the Logos Bible Study who believe that they have received a renewed mind can also hold this perspective that Paul offers to the Corinthian church. By accepting the narrative of the Gospel as the primary narrative of their lives,

²⁵⁰ Murray J. Harris, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: 2005), 338.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 341-344.

incarcerated Christians can find commonality with the declarations of Paul in Scriptures like 2 Corinthians 4:8-9. If Paul, as posited by Esler and Grieb, is offering the story of the Gospel to invite and encourage people to find a Christian identity that stands against dominant cultures of violence, idolatry and egoism, there are incarcerated people—like those interviewed for this research—who would accept the renewed mind that leads to Christian identity and the use of Scriptures like 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 to reaffirm their ability to reject the practices of oppressive prison culture.

4.5. “Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise your name:” Psalm 142:7

I cannot conclude this chapter without considering the scripture that became more or less the motto of Jericho Prison Ministries: Psalm 142:7. This scripture was on the cover of Jericho’s informational brochure and was on its letterhead. The logo (see Figure 9) shows Jericho’s interpretation of “prison” as a dark cage of incarceration. Here we shall briefly consider the historical interpretation of this text and compare that history to Jericho’s evangelical interpretation of the text.

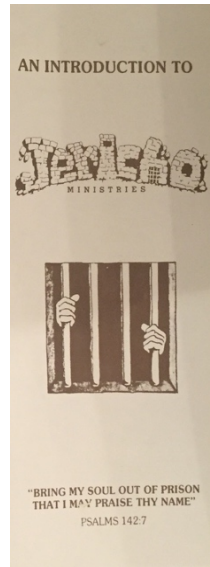


Figure 9. Cover of Jericho’s informational brochure

It is commonly known that the book of Psalms is an anthology of 150 “poetic prayers” that are divided into five books and have the purpose of addressing God with supplications and praises for God’s attributes and deeds. They also share oracles, appeals and instructions from God to worshippers and readers.²⁵² Psalm 142 comes from the fifth book of the Psalms (107-150) and of the major forms of Psalms this one is a prayer for help or a “lament.”²⁵³ It has two stanzas (verses 1-4 and verses 5-7) with the first focusing on complaining to God about being attacked and without refuge and with the second focusing on God being a refuge.²⁵⁴

The informational brochure of Jericho Ministries focuses on the King James Version of Psalm 142:7, “*Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name.*” Many commentators

²⁵² Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press (1987), 525.

²⁵³ Rolf Jacobson, “Psalms,” *New Interpreter’s Bible: One Volume Commentary*, Beverly Gaventa and David Petersen editors, (Nashville: Abingdon Press (1989), 308.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 348.

on this Psalm note that the psalmist is petitioning for rescue from a God that has the power to do so.²⁵⁵ The Hebrew word *mesegar* מִסְגֵּר , means “cage or prison” and while the King James Version translates *nepheshi* as “my soul,” John Joseph Owens simply translates it as “me.”²⁵⁶ The use of “prison” in this Psalm is metaphorical,²⁵⁷ and Jericho seems to use it metaphorically in its brochure. Upon opening the brochure (see Figure 2), we see that Jericho clearly wants to attract volunteers for its mission of participating in God’s work of freeing people from the prison of sin while behind prison walls. Even though the “renewed minds” of incarcerated Christians could certainly view this Scripture as a call to free oneself from all sorts of bondage in order to express one’s Christian identity, this Scripture is used by Jericho to invite civilians to participate in the work of liberating incarcerated souls from the bondage of sin. This perspective can be seen as presumptive and even condescending since a person could read the brochure and assume that people are incarcerated because they are in bondage to sin. Freedom from the bondage of sin does not necessarily lead to freedom from the American system of mass incarceration.

The Bible has many Scriptures that a person with a “renewed mind” in Christ could see as translations of reality that support a person’s practice of prison Bible study. I have discussed in this chapter only a few of those Scriptures as examples of the renderings of reality that inspire and encourage an incarcerated person to resist prison culture through counter-cultural attitudes and perspectives that are manifested through daily behaviors and regular

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ John Joseph Owens, *Analytical Key to the Old Testament: Ezra – Song of Solomon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 509.

²⁵⁷ Jacobson, 348.

religious practices. Chapter 5 will offer theoretical lenses that can help interpret the perspectives of the incarcerated and civilian practitioners of the Logos Bible Study of Jericho Prison Ministries.

5. Theoretical perspectives on the Logos Bible Study as a tool for translation and transmission of the Christian faith

Evangelism and Christian discipleship were the primary motivating factors for Jericho to create the Logos Bible Study. In this chapter, I will examine Jericho's perspectives on Evangelism and on Christian discipleship through several lenses in order to help situate the practice in the prison context and within a broader context of human development. In chapters 2, 3 and 4, I presented the values held by the leadership of Jericho and the practitioners of LBS. In this chapter, I will examine more closely Jericho's values of evangelism and Christian discipleship through philosophical, pedagogical and theological lenses. This analysis will help discern further the strengths and weaknesses of the practice of LBS in the Prison.

“Our task is to share the Good News of God’s love with a broken humanity. Christ has given us the Great Commission to evangelize the world in the power and the boldness of the Holy Spirit.” — Jericho Ministries, Inc.²⁵⁸

This quote was the declaration of the evangelical perspective that motivated the leadership and volunteers of Jericho to pursue prison ministry. Evangelism is boldly stated as one of the primary goals of the organization and it considered the Logos Bible Study to be an instrument of that goal. The perspective of Jericho on evangelism is in accordance with the neo-evangelical perspective described by Daniel McKim: evangelism is the urgency of

²⁵⁸ Jericho Ministries, Inc., Statement of Faith, Figure 2, panel 5.

seeking the conversion of sinful men and women to Christ.²⁵⁹ Jericho's investment in the creation of the Logos Bible Study was born out of their belief that the residents of prisons were a part of the "broken humanity" who needed the healing offered by Christian conversion and discipleship. As expressed in earlier chapters of this research, the leadership of Jericho believed that if prison residents were converted then prison culture, and eventually civil society could be transformed for the better.

There are many scholars and activists who criticize this argument for the evangelization of the prison population. As discussed in Chapter 1 of this research, perspectives by evangelical groups like Jericho can encourage people to assume that the Christian volunteers who come into the prison are the righteous ones who are needed to help the sinners in prison to become good Christians and honorable citizens. Christian activists like Janet Wolf of Nashville, Tennessee have worked impressively for decades to reveal how such evangelical points of view limit the potential of prison ministry and even add to the oppression felt by the incarcerated.²⁶⁰ Wolf points out that the above-stated point of view that good people in churches are called to evangelize the lost people in prison has become the standard

²⁵⁹ Daniel McKim, *The Bible in Theology & Preaching*, 89.

²⁶⁰ Janet Wolf is a minister in the United Methodist church who has been a national influence on prison education and prison reform initiatives for decades. She started as a poverty rights organizer 1975 and moved on to serve as a college and seminary professor. She has established partnerships with people who are now or have been incarcerated in order to create think tanks inside prisons that focus on system change and the facilitation of college classes that bring together students from the inside and from the free world which support her life-long arguments for transformative vs. retributive justice. She has also engaged in public theology and nonviolent direct action organizing alongside organizations like the Children's Defense Fund, with whom she works to disrupt and dismantle the cradle to prison pipeline by encouraging the development of new leaders through partnerships with young people who struggle with school, the streets and poverty. See <http://nationalcouncilofelders.com/Bios/janet-wolf/>. Web. 12 April 2018.

definition of prison ministry in America and a barrier that must be overcome if real effective prison ministry can take place.²⁶¹ This perspective can lead to ministries that silence the voices and hide the faces and stories of the incarcerated.²⁶² Since the suppression of people's voices and stories is among the designs of the prison industrial complex, the church must beware of encouraging those evangelical perspectives that have the same effects. When such suppression comes from religious people in the prison context, detainees can be forced to deny their own reality while inhabiting the reality imposed by the religious volunteers.²⁶³

Tanya Erzen is cited in chapter one of this research for her astute criticism of evangelical ministry in prisons and it is useful to re-introduce her perspective at this point because she has offered insights on prison evangelism that demonstrate well how the evangelical perspective on prison ministry translates into the attitudes and practices of prison ministers. Erzen offers that evangelicals have certain expectations that govern the programs they offer. They expect that incarcerated men and women can be religiously redeemed in addition to being socially rehabilitated. Evangelicals expect their programs to bring about changes of people's hearts, which can lead to change that social rehabilitation programs cannot do. Christian volunteers expect that the Holy Spirit will use their programs to transform people's hearts and make them become people who will not return to prison.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Janet Wolf, "To see and be seen," in *I was in Prison: United Methodist Perspectives on Prison Ministry*, James Shapshire, Mark Hicks, Richard Staglin, editors (Nashville: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church, 2008), 122.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Tanya Erzen, *God in Captivity: The Rise of Faith-Based Prison Ministries in the Age of Incarceration*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017), 4.

Erzen, Wolf and other critics demonstrate that with such expectations, evangelical Christians focus their pastoral care on individuals and ignore the social systems and structures that disproportionately push the impoverished and people of color into the criminal justice system. Such expectations reveal perspectives that ignore important Biblical perspectives that recognize aspects of sin that are structural and collective and put undue weight on the oppressed to be the leaders of change within prison culture.²⁶⁵

Throughout Christian history, evangelism is expected to lead to conversion and the Bible gives many accounts of evangelism leading to conversion on both individual and communal levels. From Jesus proclaiming to build the church based on the individually professed faith of the Apostle Peter,²⁶⁶ to the conversion of thousands of people who created a new community because of the evangelistic work of the Apostles,²⁶⁷ the Bible has given Christians through the centuries inspiration to work toward the conversion of individuals and whole societies. Christians have recognized the importance of individuals like Moses who submitted to the call of God and the importance of people like the Israelites who followed a call to create social structures that practice God's justice. Despite the biblical call to work for the conversion of social structures in addition to the conversion of individuals, scholars like Erzen note that most American evangelicals focus only on individual conversion in prison ministry.²⁶⁸ I have shown in Chapter 2 of this research that Jericho Ministries' Bible studies before the Logos Bible Study followed this evangelical perspective of prisons being full of lost

²⁶⁵ See Erzen, 182 and Wolf, 122.

²⁶⁶ See Matthew 16:18: "*on this rock I will build my church.*"

²⁶⁷ See Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2.

²⁶⁸ Erzen, 181-182.

individuals who need their hearts converted through the power of the Gospel. Through Bible study curricula used by Jericho like *The Covenant and the Kingdom*, a space in the prison was created where the incarcerated participants had little opportunity to share their personal perspectives and life experiences. With limited opportunity for intimate exchange between the lives of the participants and the Biblical witness, one can assume that the conversion of the heart that is pursuant to conversation with the Gospel is also limited. Through the LBS, Jericho sought to deepen its work on individual conversion in ways that could also lead to the conversion of the social structures and systems that created the incarcerated environment and contributed to larger societal forces that bring people to that environment.

According to many Evangelical Christians, the use of the Gospel in order to bring about the conversion of the individual and of a culture or society is a process that requires the Holy Spirit but the study of the transmission of the Christian faith has revealed another dynamic: translation. Effective evangelism depends on an individual or a society understanding the Gospel message and becoming conversant with it. The Gospel cannot be transmitted if it is not understood and a person or society's level of understanding can be a help or a hindrance to conversion. I have noted that Brueggemann makes a strong argument that effective Christian evangelism is dependent on the evangelist's ability to capture the imagination of her audience in a way that persuades people to switch their primary story or rendering of reality to the reality translated by the Gospel.²⁶⁹ Brueggemann also concludes that the quality of the translation will affect the success of evangelism. He states that an effective process of translation requires that the Gospel "be voiced and heard as: intellectually

²⁶⁹ Brueggemann, 11.

credible in an unreflective society; politically critical and constructive in a cynical community; morally dense and freighted in a self-indulgent society; artistically satisfying in a society overwhelmed by religious kitsch; and pastorally attentive in a society of easy but fake answers.”²⁷⁰ Brueggemann is describing a type of evangelism that is conversant with the receiving culture rather than imposed upon it. According to Brueggemann, evangelism “is an activity of transformed consciousness that results in an altered perception of world, neighbor and self and an authorization to live differently in that world.”²⁷¹ He continues by declaring that a person with a transformed consciousness participates in the ongoing work of the church in bringing more and more of public and private life under “the rule of a world-transforming, slave-liberating, covenant-making, promise-keeping, justice-commanding God.”²⁷² Evangelism is an ongoing process of telling and retelling Biblical renderings of reality because as different societies grow and change, the Gospel must be intelligible and understood by people whose minds are regularly targeted by competing narratives or translations of reality that are attractive to the imagination on intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical levels.

If the Gospel is going to have any relevance, if evangelism is going to be effective, the church around the world must “endlessly engage itself in re-enacting and appropriating” the Gospel narrative so that people feel convicted and confident in transforming their lives according to the translation of reality offered by the evangelists.²⁷³ In the work of evangelism, the process of translation is a primordial dynamic. I shall address in detail how the dynamic of

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 128.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

translation makes effective the transmission of the Christian faith and how that dynamic at work in Jericho Ministries' discipleship program (LBS) would be viewed by Andrew Walls and Paul Ricœur.

5.1. Jericho Ministries' mission to evangelize incarcerated people through the lenses of Andrew F. Walls and Paul Ricœur

When considering the dynamic of translation in the transmission of the Christian faith, it is important to include the influential work of Andrew F. Walls. Walls dedicated his life to the field of Church History, with a special focus on Mission Studies. Organizations like Jericho Ministries are focused on transmission of the Christian faith through discipleship programs that must translate the Bible into different places and cultures. The work of Andrew Walls could evaluate the effectiveness of such programs in light of the history of the transmission of the faith around the world. Andrew Walls started his career from the late 1950s to mid-1960s as a theological educator in Sierra Leone and in Nigeria. Also in the 1960s he established the Journal of Religion in Africa. In the 1980s he founded the Centre for the Study of World Christianity, currently located at the University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom, and in the 1990s the Journal for Studies in World Christianity.²⁷⁴ This pioneer in the field of World Christianity has perspectives on the transmission of the Christian faith that could help us understand how Jericho used the Logos Bible Study to find translations of reality that would make evangelism and discipleship in prison effective.

²⁷⁴ William R. Burrows, Mark R. Gornik and Janice A. McLean, eds., *Understanding World Christianity: The Vision and the Work of Andrew F. Walls* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 51-59.

With the understanding that transmission of the Christian faith is dependent upon the translation of Christ, Walls reflects on the general importance of translation in human history and on its particular importance within the Christian faith. “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14) is, according to Andrew Walls, the original event of translation that is foundational to the Christian mission of transmission of the faith. According to Professor Walls, in the Christian tradition, the Incarnation is translation. For Walls, Judaism and Islam do not represent God’s man-ward speech as translated speech, however, in Christianity, God’s speech becomes human.²⁷⁵ This perspective on the Incarnation could stir up much debate. From as far back as Saint Athanasius, the concept of the Word of God being incarnated in Jesus Christ has been the subject of Christological debate for centuries. While many would criticize, Walls’ Protestant viewpoint on the Incarnation, the connection that he found between it and the transmission of the Christian faith could be supported by Athanasius’ position that Jesus was the means by which God’s creation could get to know their Creator.²⁷⁶ For Walls, the Incarnation was God’s act of sharing knowledge with humanity, knowledge that needed to be translated in a way that humanity could understand it. It is beyond the scope of this work to discuss at length the implications of Walls’ perception of the Incarnation.

²⁷⁵ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 29.

²⁷⁶ “But, in fact, the good God has given them a share in His own Image, that is, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and has made even themselves after the same Image and Likeness. Why? Simply in order that through this gift of Godlikeness in themselves they may be able to perceive the Image Absolute, that is the Word Himself, and through Him to apprehend the Father; which knowledge of their Maker is for men the only really happy and blessed life.” St. Athanasius (2009-08-19). *On the Incarnation* - Enhanced Version. Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 13. Kindle Edition

However, his perception led to a concept that is important to this research: the Christian translation principle.

Walls' Christian translation principle equates the Incarnation with translation by asserting that God "astonishingly" chose the precarious practice of translation as God's mode of action for the establishment of a renewed and redemptive relationship with humanity. Walls acknowledges that the "exact transmission of meaning from one linguistic medium to another is continually hampered."²⁷⁷ He recognizes that structural and cultural differences in languages can create situations where the "pre-loaded" words of the receptor language can drag the new words and ideas of the source language into previously "uncharted" areas for that source language. This risks the creation of inaccurate translations and misunderstandings making the work of the translator a "high-risk business."²⁷⁸ Professor Walls asserts that any confidence we have in the translatability of the Bible rests on that original act of translation in Palestine. There is a history of translation of the Bible into different cultures and contexts because there was a special moment where the Word was translated into flesh.²⁷⁹ In essence, the Christian translation principle of Walls states that when God in Christ became man, "Divinity was translated into humanity as though humanity were a receptor language. Christ is the Eternal Word of God, translated."²⁸⁰ This principle asserts that this theological event is affected by the limits of human communication and culture through time and space. Andrew Walls points out that when Divinity was translated into humanity, he became a "person in a

²⁷⁷ Walls, 20.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 26.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 26.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 27.

particular locality and in a particular ethnic group, at a particular place and time.”²⁸¹ Therefore the initial translation of God into humanity occurred under very specific cultural conditions.²⁸² This Christian translation principle is a helpful tool in guiding our analysis of the Logos Bible Study at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility since it explains the dominant dynamic at work during LBS: a rendering of an emancipative reality within the oppressive reality of incarceration.

The Christian translation principle explains that throughout time we humans take in new ideas, in terms of the ideas that we already have. In order for the humans in first century Palestine to have the capacity to accept the Incarnation, that translation of Divinity had to occur in Palestine. Since translation is the attempt to express the meaning of the source language by using the resources and working system of the receptor language, in Palestine a successful translation of Divinity required that people of the receiving cultural context be able to comprehend it by means of and in terms of the Palestinian culture’s pre-existing language and conventions.²⁸³ Walls recognizes that the issues and problems that occur with Bible

²⁸¹ Ibid., 29.

²⁸² See Olivier Bauer, “La Christologie vue par un observateur particulier sur deux îles du pacifique sud,” Conférence prononcée dans le cadre de l’Université théologique libérale d’automne, (Lyon, septembre 2000), 3. Here Olivier Bauer observed at work the French Polynesian Pacific Islands perspective that the revelation of God there was “simultaneous” to the revelation of God in the West. Similar to the teaching of E. Stanley Jones, the Methodist missionary to India, when Protestant missionaries arrived, they did not bring the Gospel because the Gospel was already there. By quoting the work of local theologians like Havea, Bauer presents the perspective that what the missionaries brought was a particular method of recognizing the Gospel of Jesus Christ already at work in the local culture. By creating an interface between Polynesian culture and the Holy Scriptures that were printed in the West, they set the stage for Polynesian theologians to express their culture’s God consciousness in the language of the Bible.

²⁸³ Walls, 28.

translation through time are similar to the issues and problems that occurred during the original event of Incarnation.²⁸⁴ According to Walls, this Incarnation event that took place within the terms of a particular context is a calling for present day Christians to face the challenges of introducing Scriptures that are embedded in languages and cultures alien to the present situation of everyday people.²⁸⁵

In *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, Walls is most concerned with the continued practice of retranslation through time. He posits that the first Divine act of translation (through Jesus in Palestine) gave rise to a constant succession of new translations. The first evidences of which can be seen if one considers the shift from the Evangelist John's representation of the Word becoming flesh,²⁸⁶ which is the Palestinian Jewish translation, to the Apostle Paul's image of the "Second Adam"²⁸⁷—the Ephesian theme of a "multi-ethnic new humanity."²⁸⁸ "Perhaps no other specific activity more clearly represents the mission of the church" than the ongoing process of Bible translation and retranslation to new contemporary cultures and contexts.²⁸⁹ This practice assures the transmission of Christian ideas of faith, hope and love which are found in the essential Christian message of Christ crucified and risen. Even though there is regular revision of the Gospel, the retranslations are in accordance with the call of spreading the Gospel as long as they remain faithful to the first

²⁸⁴ These "problems that occurred during the original event of Incarnation" were of course those religious leaders who refused the claims that Jesus was the Word of God made flesh.

²⁸⁵ Walls, 29.

²⁸⁶ John 1:14.

²⁸⁷ The Book of Romans chapter 5.

²⁸⁸ Walls, 27.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 28.

translation in Jewish Palestine. If the retranslations are faithful, then it is believed that Christ can live within his followers in new cultural contexts as he once lived thoroughly at home in the culture of first-century Jewish Palestine.²⁹⁰

In order to construct a comparable, and thereby, faithful revision of the Gospel, in a culture other than first century Palestine, Walls would offer that the translator of the message would need to ensure that the translation takes into account the shared consciousness, traditions, mental processes and patterns of relationship that compose and direct the target culture or nation-state. For Walls, the “Great Commission” of Matthew 28:19 teaches that, if translated faithfully, Christ can become visible within those very things that constitute nationality and culture so that “disciples can be made of nations.”²⁹¹ This would require that the message (i.e., Bible Scripture), be expanded by translation and also that the perspectives of the target language and culture be expanded. Through the Christian translation principle, the original divine translation event can be expanded beyond first century Jewish Palestine to even a 21st century penitentiary milieu.²⁹²

For Professor Walls, a faithful translation can lead to conversion within the receptor language. In his Christian principle of translation, “conversion” does not imply the substitution or addition of language, ideas and thinking structures. Instead, conversion involves a turning or re-orientation of those structures to new directions and the application of new material and standards to an already functioning system of thought and conduct.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 29.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 27.

²⁹² Ibid., 28.

²⁹³ Ibid.

Translation in the Christian tradition is a process that has a beginning but not necessarily an end, as it can be a constantly working model for turning processes of language toward a greater God-consciousness.²⁹⁴ It is constantly at work because “as social life and language change, so must translation.”²⁹⁵ If the work of translation is efficient, or faithful, then a source language—like the language of Scripture—would not be seen as a tool for penetrating and replacing an established culture, rather, it would be seen as a vehicle for conversion for the appropriation and expression of a new identity within a culture.²⁹⁶ Efficient translations that lead to conversion are the ones that are accepted and owned, but they can also be rejected and ignored. In either case, efficient Christian representations of reality are offered but never imposed upon the receiving cultural milieu. For Andrew Walls a faithful translation of scriptures in the American prison context would lead to conversion or a “turning” of selfish attitudes, hurtful language and oppressive practices toward a greater consciousness of God that works toward the humanization and empowerment of others.

Since Andrew Walls is an expert on the transmission of the Christian faith in Africa, one could argue that using his perspective within the Western context of American incarceration might be inappropriate. Vinay Samuel, while he was executive director of International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians, wrote an article that could be used to question the use of Walls’ perspectives in a Western system of incarceration. In his article “Christian Scholarship in the 21st Century, a Non-Western Perspective,” he posits that even though Walls has effectively demonstrated the major impacts of Christian scholarship in

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 29.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 40.

Africa, his work does not analyze the impacts of Christian scholarship on Western civilization but simply assumes it.²⁹⁷ Certainly one could find other authors who focus more specifically than Walls does on the dynamics of evangelism in America and its prisons. Theologians like Brueggemann clearly offer insights on the strengths and weaknesses of evangelism in America that could be more clearly connected than Walls to evangelistic efforts like the Logos Bible Study at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. Nevertheless, the Christian translation principle of Andrew Walls is used in this research because he has presented it as a universal concept that is arguably an essential element of effective Christian education anywhere, even in prison. Walls argues that any translation of the Gospel that occurs in any place and time that is outside of first century Palestine is a retranslation of the original translation. Therefore, the same dynamics for an effective translation that would lead a culture in Africa to convert or to turn its language through an exchange with the expanded language of the Gospel are the same dynamics that would convert a person or a culture in an American prison. The translation principle is necessary for a person to understand the Gospel and to start a process of Christian education that Christians would hope might lead to transformation. Chaplains and prison ministers are regularly called to translate the Scriptures in a way that the incarcerated can understand and in a way that expands the Gospel narrative to include the society of captives.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ Vinay Samuel, "Christian Scholarship in the 21st Century: a Non-Western Perspective," *Transformation* 19.4 (2002), 229.

²⁹⁸ "The most basic task of a translator is to say, as clearly as is possible, what something means. For the chaplain this involves discovering, uncovering, and recovering the meaning in any given situation, in any given dialogue or gap, which is essentially a spiritual exercise." Ian Macritchie, "The Chaplain as Translator," *Journal of Religion and Health* 40.1, (Spring 2001), 209.

At this point, I would like to switch from a Christian to a philosophical lens on translation in my analysis of the Logos Bible Study as an evangelical tool of Jericho Ministries in its mission to render a transformative view of reality among the incarcerated. Paul Ricœur has been an important support for the field of Pastoral Praxeology.²⁹⁹ While the work of Ricœur on the hermeneutics of text and action has often been referenced in the field of Pastoral Praxeology, his perspectives on translation would also enhance this study of the renderings of reality offered by the Logos Bible Study in the prison milieu.

During World War II, Paul Ricœur was one of those French intellectuals who was arrested and put into a German prison camp. While he was a prisoner of war, he created learning environments where he taught philosophy courses during his imprisonment.³⁰⁰ His experience of translating German philosophical works for the French men with whom he was incarcerated, gave him unique perspectives on the work of translation within a hostile environment. As a chaplain who is called to translate Scriptures regularly in a hostile environment and who is using Pastoral Praxeology to analyze the practice of prison Bible study, I thought it was important to refer to Ricœur because of his life experience as a prisoner of war and as a scholar of the hermeneutics of biblical and secular texts as well as the hermeneutics of human practices and actions.

²⁹⁹ “En empruntant largement à Paul Ricœur, on définira la pratique comme un système complexe d’actions et d’interactions de sujets, orienté vers une ou diverses fins, comportant des relations de coordination et de subordination, réglé par des règles de différents types, marqué par une dissymétrie entre les acteurs de ces pratiques, situé dans un contexte (institutionnel, socioculturel, religieux) qui l’influence et lui donne signification, et qu’il cherche à influencer.” Jean Guy Nadeau, “La pratique comme lieu de la théologie pratique,” *La théologie pratique* 60.2 (2 June 2004), 214. Print.

³⁰⁰ Charles Reagan, *Paul Ricœur: His life and his work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2, 7-12.

Brueggemann states that Ricœur has produced a lot of work to demonstrate that “reality lives by text.”³⁰¹ According to Ricœur, “text” refers to any written narrative that invites interpretations that can lead to meanings that go beyond the initial intentions of the author.³⁰² Brueggemann agrees with Ricœur that during the act of interpreting a text, the interpreter, according to his geographic, temporal, socio-economic and/or psychological situation can appropriate the narrative.³⁰³ Ricœur certainly can give some important insights therefore, on how the Logos Bible Study translates reality as a religious practice intended by Jericho Ministries to influence prison culture, starting with the people living within it. Like, Andrew Walls, Ricœur would posit that translation is a difficult and risky endeavor. He states that there are two resistances to the work of translation that come from both the receptor language and the foreign language.³⁰⁴ Even though translation can be difficult and uncertain, Ricœur acknowledges that it is a necessary practice because humans speak different languages and if they want to be able to trade, travel and negotiate human exchanges they must have the capacity to learn different languages and to transfer a message from one language to another.³⁰⁵

Ricœur would argue that any problems with translation in general and with understanding biblical texts in particular, occur because of the absence of a third text. Ricœur

³⁰¹ Walter Brueggemann, *The Word Militant: Preaching a Decentering Word* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2007), 23.

³⁰² Paul Ricœur, “De l’herméneutique des textes à l’herméneutique de l’action,” in *Du Texte à l’Action* (Editions du Seuil, 1986), 170-171.

³⁰³ Brueggemann, 23.

³⁰⁴ Paul Ricœur, *On Translation* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 4-5.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 11,13, 21.

states that in order to have a “true translation,” the translator needs a “third text” that holds the “true meaning” of the source text and to which one can compare the original text and the translation.³⁰⁶ Since most problems with translations occur due to the absence of this third text, Ricœur would invite us to pose the following question. What could we say was the confirming “third text” of the New Testament, which sought to offer a translation of reality that saw Jesus as the Word made flesh in Jewish Palestine? It is outside the scope of this essay to consider all of the possible theological answers to this question.³⁰⁷ Nevertheless, it is important to note here a dynamic that Ricœur would highlight when considering this event of the Word of God being made flesh, as well as any subsequent retranslation of that event. Ricœur would expect that those Christians who have accepted the mission of sincerely trying to retranslate the Gospel event in Palestine into various contexts and cultures around the world must also accept the challenge of searching for some original language (i.e., spiritual language), “some a priori codes, or some universal or transcendental structures” that are reconstructed through the work of translation.³⁰⁸ This spiritual language would have to be acknowledged by both the target culture and the translator as a sort of third text or proof of a faithful translation or rendering of the Gospel narrative.

Paul Ricœur would warn that a faithful translation is a difficult thing to achieve. In other words, it can be difficult to discern if a retranslation in a cultural context has faithfully

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 7.

³⁰⁷ For example, one could argue from a Christian perspective that the Scripture written by the Hebrew prophets formed the “third text” that validates Incarnation and the creation of the church.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 15-16.

achieved enough equivalence of meaning with the original message.³⁰⁹ In translation, there are two theoretical (and ethical) alternatives: faithfulness and betrayal.³¹⁰ Without an absolute criterion for a “good” translation, humans can only try to achieve some level of equivalence of meaning in a translation, that is to say, a rendering that is sufficiently faithful without achieving an identical match in meaning.³¹¹ Indeed, without the capacity to achieve singularity, Ricœur would say that the risk of betraying the Christian mission of retranslation and of evangelism is considerable. That is part of the “grandeur of translation,” according to Ricœur.³¹² We can accomplish the mission of constructing the comparable, or in other words, reformulating the foreign message in a way that the receiver can creatively appropriate it. Unfortunately, included in the grandeur is also the possibility of creative betrayal of the source message or text.

According to Ricœur, faithful translators would see translation as a form of hospitality,³¹³ where the pleasure of dwelling in the other’s language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word into one’s own welcoming house.³¹⁴ Ricœur would say that those Christian chaplains, volunteers and inmates who have effective evangelistic practices, are the ones who see the work of translating the Gospel as a work of hospitality where God is brought closer to the reader and the reader closer to God. However, Ricœur

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 25.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 14.

³¹¹ Ibid., 22.

³¹² Ibid., 37.

³¹³ Even though Ricœur would not seek to make this observation, hospitality is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Christian tradition and a theological argument could be made for missionaries to see themselves as doing a ministry of hospitality.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 10

(and Walls) would also caution them that along with offering intellectual, emotional and spiritual enrichment to both the source and the target languages and cultures, the work of translation in Christian and other contexts involves the risk of betraying as well as serving two masters.

How can a “hospitable” practice of translation exist in a hostile prison environment? In the pivotal work mentioned earlier by Gresham Sykes, *The Society of Captives*, prison culture is described as so hostile that a parish of captives must differ from a parish in the free world in the dimensions of shared consciousness, mental processes and patterns of relationship. Prison chaplains know that in the American prison environment, “hardness” is a way of life and therefore, in the parish of captives, everything seen, heard and touched is hard—from beds, to attitudes, to language.³¹⁵ Ricœur would be interested in efforts made by Christians (or other faith groups) to translate the messages of Holy Scriptures within this hostile prison context. As mentioned above, Ricœur noted that humans actively seek translation and want to learn other languages in order to gain tools that can help them navigate life. Humans, who are imprisoned, regularly seek tools that can help them find places of strength and comfort within their minds and within their incarcerated environments. There are many among the incarcerated who seek the “hospitable” practice of translation in prison. I have seen many incarcerated men request Bible studies in search of renderings of reality that give them comfort and strength within a context of punishment and dehumanization.³¹⁶ Ricœur would

³¹⁵ Lennie Spitale, *Prison Ministry* (Nashville, TN : Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 88.

³¹⁶ In his book *The Executed God: The way of the Cross in lockdown America*, Mark Taylor writes at length about the dynamic of dehumanization in prisons.

offer that a “hospitable” practice of translating Scriptures in a harsh prison environment would produce caring and contemplative human relationships.

The perspectives of Andrew Walls and Paul Ricœur on translation offer some insights on Jericho Ministries’ use of the Logos Bible Study as a tool for evangelism. Jericho created LBS because it believed that “Christians need to know how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems. Inmates have their own peculiar set of everyday problems to deal with. We need to encourage them to live out their faith, as well as share it with others.”³¹⁷ Certainly Jericho’s reasons for starting LBS were based on the limited scope of the American neo-evangelical movement—a scope which, as I have already mentioned, causes many of its proponents to see prison residents as sinful people who need help in gaining a transformed consciousness because their incarceration is primarily due to their individual failings instead of the failings of society. Even though Jericho’s reasons for coming into the prison environment may have been short-sighted and even condescending, once Jericho’s leadership engaged prison culture they learned that it offered a “peculiar set of everyday problems” and therefore any endeavors of evangelism had to include efforts to acknowledge and engage the culture of the Prison as well as the larger societal forces that bring people into the prison system. Walls would say therefore that in order for Jericho to succeed in its objective of prison evangelism, it would have to employ the Christian translation principle and create a space where the translators of the Gospel narrative ensure that the translation takes into account the shared consciousness, traditions, mental processes and patterns of relationship that compose and direct prison culture. Effective faith transmission would have to be an exchange

³¹⁷ See the Ministry Objectives of Jericho Ministries, Figure 2, panel 6.

where the evangelists are willing to be open to the possibility of the Gospel message being expanded to include the life experiences of the incarcerated. For Walls, Jericho's volunteers would have to create, in partnership with the incarcerated,³¹⁸ a translation of the Gospel that is not blindly imposed upon prison culture but rather, one that works alongside the people within the culture to transform and redirect it in new ways.

Paul Ricœur, who has produced an impressive body of work on the hermeneutics of text and action that has included in-depth reflection on Bible hermeneutics, would say that what Jericho is seeking by creating LBS in prison is a hospitable translation of the Bible within a hostile environment. By taking on this endeavor, Jericho is risking a betrayal of the biblical narrative since the practitioners of prison Bible study cannot create a translation of the Gospel narrative in a 21st century prison that is identical to a translation from first century Jerusalem. There is a risk of perverting the Gospel message in a way that is outside of the 2000 years of the church's renderings of the message. Nevertheless, both Walls and Ricœur would agree that the Logos Bible Study, despite all its challenges, was a sincere attempt by Jericho Ministries to do the work necessary to create, in partnership with the incarcerated, a discipleship program that enables its incarcerated participants "to develop a Christian lifestyle for the harsh setting of the prison environment."³¹⁹

³¹⁸ "Pastoral care [in partnership] **with**—not *to* or *for*—people caught up inside the prison system requires focusing on a healing process through community." See Janet Wolf, *I was in Prison*, 131.

³¹⁹ See the Ministry Objectives of Jericho Ministries, Figure 2, panel 6.

5.2. The Logos Bible Study's mission to disciple and transform incarcerated people and prison culture through the lenses of James Loder and Jack Mezirow

At this point I return to Brueggemann's position that evangelism "is an activity of transformed consciousness,"³²⁰ in order to analyze more closely the intention of Jericho Ministries to use the Logos Bible Study as a means of bringing about transformation in its practitioners. Walls' Christian translation principle states that effective translation of the Gospel leads to the conversion of the receiving person and receptor culture but how exactly does the transformation occur? What is the process of transformation that not only leads to "an altered perception of world, neighbor and self" but also "an authorization to live differently in the world?"³²¹ Certainly the evangelical perspective held by the leadership of Jericho Ministries would assume that the Holy Spirit would bring about transformation through the Logos Bible Study. However, when the Board of Trustees agreed to use the work of the philosopher of Christian Education, James Loder, in the creation of its model for prison education,³²² the Board invited deeper reflection about the psychological dimensions of spiritual growth. By bringing in the perspective of Loder, Jericho's Board of Trustees admitted that their previous pedagogical model for Bible study lacked the ability to fully engage prison culture and offer renderings of reality that could lead practically to a transformation of perspectives and culture within the Prison. Among its objectives for prison ministry, Jericho sought to create a Bible study that would enable inmates "to develop a

³²⁰ Brueggemann, *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism*, 129.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² See Chapter 2 of this research.

Christian lifestyle FOR the harsh setting of the prison environment.”³²³ Jericho recognized that one could not ignore the harshness of prison when creating a space for biblical reflection and therefore it would have to develop a method of translating the biblical witness that does not avoid but rather directly engages the dilemmas of the incarcerated. By directly engaging their dilemmas, Jericho could offer renderings of reality that the incarcerated could see as holding credible and practical solutions the problems of their lives. By engaging the personal and societal conflicts of the incarcerated, Loder would say that the Logos Bible Study is preparing the way for real transformation to occur.

James Loder would say that the coercive and oppressive environment of prison could be transformed into an opportunity for identity transformation. In his books *The Transforming Moment* and *The Logic of the Spirit*, Loder describes on theological and philosophical levels the process by which the Holy Spirit of God can transform the human process of development. Like other philosophers of education of his time,³²⁴ Loder was a proponent of theories of transformation in adult education. He posited that the process of human development calls for the transformation of presumptions and that the starting point for the transformation of meaning schemes and perspectives in adults is a conflict or disorienting dilemma. A disorienting dilemma occurs when there is a conflict between what is known and what needs to be understood in a person. This conflict leads to an interlude for scanning where the person seeks new facts and perspectives that can help in the construction of meaning. After an indeterminate amount of time, the person can experience a constructive act of imagination.

³²³ See the Ministry Objectives of Jericho Ministries, Figure 2, panel 6.

³²⁴ Here I am referencing educational philosophers of adult education in particular, like Jack Mezirow.

This occurs when a person receives an intuitive insight that transforms the person's perceptions about the conflict and she arrives at a new perspective. Then the moment of release, or an "aha" moment, occurs where the person expresses the new insight. The transformation of meaning schemes is complete once the person creates an interpretation of the newly released perspective and then seeks agreement on the new perspective from the person's larger community.³²⁵ Loder concedes that this process of human development can occur without the Holy Spirit or some religious revelation. Conflict is a part of the human condition and humans are created with the natural ability to adapt, develop and transform themselves in the face of conflict.

As a Presbyterian Christian, Loder offers that the Holy Spirit can transform our normal human logic of transformation. In his discussion of transformational logic, Loder argues that negotiation of meaning, transformation in knowing and the reformulation of identity all happen within the parameters of four dimensions of human existence. He describes these four dimensions as the self, the world, the Void and the Holy. The self is made up of three parts: (1) conscience, which is the choice and awareness of one's relational integrity with oneself or one's positive relationship with one's own identity separate from the "endless mirrors" of self-reflection offered by society; (2) reflective self awareness or the understanding of one's own agency and power of choice in the face of a world of choices and social constructs; and (3) the spiritual self which is a faithful and transparent relationship with the spiritual presence of Christ.³²⁶ The second dimension of human existence is "the world" which includes all

³²⁵ James Loder, *The Transforming Moment* (Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard: 1989), 229

³²⁶ Ibid., 228.

external realities constructed by the self through interaction with physical, psychological, social and cultural resources.³²⁷ The third dimension of the human life is the Void which represents the human drift toward loss, emptiness and annihilation. The fear of this state of being can lead to selfish and desperate behaviors that lack faith, hope and love.³²⁸ Within the three dimensions of human life opportunities for transformation and human development abound. The fourth dimension that Loder calls the Holy stands apart from the other three human dimensions and has the power to transform them—to transform the transformational logic of human existence at all levels.³²⁹

Loder would agree with social psychologists like Ayton, Dhami, and Loewenstein in their observation that once a person is faced with the disorienting dilemma of entry into the coercive environment of corrections, what he brings to the prison and what he learns while he is there will determine his success in adapting his identity for survival.³³⁰ Consequently, the new identity gained for survival in a penitentiary could vary from one that is ignorant, apathetic, coercive, violent, and/or depressed to one that is mindful, caring, cooperative, educated, focused, determined, responsible and hopeful. Facing this hard environment pushes the detainee to start a process of transforming his perspectives and meaning schemes as he negotiates his relationship with the incarcerated world that seeks to condemn and control him. Loder would add that this process of transformation could be greatly influenced by the almost

³²⁷ Ibid., 230.

³²⁸ Ibid., 230.

³²⁹ Ibid., 224.

³³⁰ Peter Ayton, Mandeep Dhami, George Loewenstein. “Adaptation to Imprisonment: indigenous or imported?” *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 34 / 8. American Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology (August 2007), 1086, 1096.

suffocating presence of the “Void” within the correctional environment. Within the prison, a person faces loss of possessions, family, citizenship, privacy, dignity, personal health and sense of self. Prison is a place where a person could most easily drown in fears of negation and will feel the need to fight for meaning. According to Loder, the fight for meaning is a part of the natural process of human transformation in such a conflicted context as prison, but the Holy Spirit can transform that process of transformation. The difference between being transformed toward either the enlightened or the obscure ends of the identity spectrum is found in the dimension of the Holy which can transform the human transformation process within the three dimensions of self, world and void within human existence. The dimension of the Holy can be the factor that decides whether a prisoner transforms into the darker or more illuminated ends of the spectrum of identities that are possible. Loder would argue, and many Bible students in prison would agree, that the presence of the Holy Spirit is necessary to overcome the obviously active forces of negation within the prison milieu.

Loder’s transformational logic would see the disorienting and coercive environment of prison as a gateway for the prisoner: to scan for new perspectives and ideas; to gain and express a new intuitive insight; to receive validation from the larger community; and to transform his identity. Loder would offer that a “larger community” capable of validating the new insights of practitioners of a prison bible study would be Christian communities in the free world—communities that could validate the presence of the Holy Spirit within the transformed perspectives and lives of those involved in penitentiary bible study. Connections to religious communities outside of the prison context are a necessary part of the transformational logic that would bring about positive identity formation despite the incarcerated environment of coercion and control. From Loder’s point of view the

transformational work of the Holy Spirit of God could transform the coercive environment of the prison into a stimulus for a person's positive development. Once the transformational logic of the Spirit transforms the transformational logic of the human being, there is hope for positive and constructive change for a person—this is the hope of prison bible study.

Even though James Loder's influence in academia is the result of his extensive efforts to find "higher-order intellectual explanations for convictional experiences that would make sense in a scientific culture,"³³¹ there are still many in the academic community who would find his work limited by the references to the mystical work of the Holy Spirit or by the Kierkegaard-inspired dimensions of his arguments and those critics would prefer using philosophers of education like Jack Mezirow to contemplate the pedagogical style of the Logos Bible Study. John "Jack" Mezirow became an influential professor of adult education at the Teachers' College of Columbia University after years of working as a consultant in adult literacy for United Nations and United States development projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America.³³² He is considered to have transformed the field of adult education after his wife's pursuit of a college education late in life inspired him to study the factors that hurt or help the learning of adult women who return to community colleges in the United States. His research discovered that most of the women had undergone a "personal transformation" following a series of "phases of changes that included a disorienting dilemma, a critical

³³¹ Dana R. Wright and Keith J. White, *The Logic of the Spirit in Human Thought and Experience: Exploring the Vision of James E. Loder Jr.* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 6.

³³² Joseph Levine, *Jack Mezirow, who transformed the field of adult learning, dies at 91*. Teachers' College Columbia University. October 2014. Web. 12 April 2018.

<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/articles/2014/october/jack-mezirow-who-transformed-the-field-of-adult-learning-d/>

assessment of assumptions, an exploration of options for new roles and building competences and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.”³³³ The understandings of the processes of transformative education were so similar between Loder and Mezirow that one could assume that they collaborated at some point in their academic careers, however, apparently they did not.³³⁴ Even though Mezirow was criticized for focusing on individual growth and development to the detriment of the social activist implications of adult learning, his supporters argue that he was very cognizant of the fact that a person must have “emancipatory learning” in order to competently challenge unjust social structures.³³⁵ Mezirow’s perspectives could offer some insightful observations about the pedagogy of the Logos Bible Study within an oppressed community.

Mezirow and his adherents would explain the process of transformative education in the following manner. Mezirow posits that parents and schools teach children certain meaning schemes (or assumptive beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions) about the content or process of problem solving. As we mature we may assess or reassess our assumptions and find them unjustified in light of new realities or new understandings of our realities.³³⁶ The transformation of meaning schemes (which can be an everyday occurrence through daily reflection on minor dilemmas) can lead to the less frequent transformation of meaning

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ After speaking with archivists and research assistants for both Jack Mezirow and James Loder, I found that there was no evidence of direct correspondence between the two.

³³⁵ Teachers’ College Columbia University. *Jack Mezirow, who transformed the field of adult learning, dies at 91*. October 2014. Web. 12 April 2018. <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/articles/2014/october/jack-mezirow-who-transformed-the-field-of-adult-learning-d/>

³³⁶ Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: 1991), 192.

perspectives (or a person's structure of habitual sets of expectations that create frames of reference for interpreting and evaluating experiences). An accumulation of transformed meaning schemes and/or externally imposed major dilemmas result in the critical self-reflection necessary for the transformation of meaning perspectives.³³⁷

Mezirow acknowledges that cultures around the world vary in developing the self-awareness in people that is necessary for "de-centration, de-contextualization and development of identity," that lead a person to understand or sympathize with the perspective of another or understand how one's own perspective interacts with another's in the eyes of a third party.³³⁸ "These qualities, as well as the ability to think abstractly (and thus distance oneself from one's own beliefs and ideas), are associated with education, particularly reading and writing."³³⁹ Mezirow's acknowledgement of differing cultures having varying capacities for promoting identity formation among people encourages us to consider the power of prison culture to influence identity formation, and to transform or even to pervert meaning schemes and perspectives.

While I firmly believe that the work of Jack Mezirow is an effective tool for analyzing the pedagogy of the Logos Bible Study, I must also note that he does not specifically address the dimensions of transformative adult education in an incarcerated environment. In this research I have come across quite a few authors who focus on the dynamics of prison education including Tanya Erzen, Janet Wolf, Harmon Wray and others. Of these prison educators, Kevin Warner seemed to offer a perspective that made a clear connection between

³³⁷ Ibid., 42, 43, 167, 168.

³³⁸ Ibid., 192.

³³⁹ Ibid.

the theoretical claims of Mezirow and the practical realities of prison that all of the prison educators referenced in this research must face. Kevin Warner is a Fulbright scholar who studied penal education systems in the United States and in Europe and who served as the National Coordinator of Prison Education in the Irish Prison Service.

Warner would offer that Mezirow's transformative education is indeed difficult to achieve in prison if one does not alleviate the predicaments that result from the dynamics of coercion, punishment and power struggles within prison culture. In one of his articles on adult education in prison, Warner acknowledges the importance of bringing into the correctional education system the notion of changing the structure of a person's presuppositions or the "meaning perspectives" used by adult prisoners to interpret experience and that the "critical reflection" necessary to bring about transformational education requires an "open space free from coercion."³⁴⁰ From the perspective of Mezirow and of certain proponents of prison education like Warner, prison can be an opportunity for detainees to reform their identities in positive ways, if they can have access to an environment that is free of hindering coercion and aggression. With this in mind, Warner created a website that promotes prison education and penal reform and calls for cooperation between governmental, educational and grass roots organizations to change the legal and social perspectives on punishment so that prisons can be re-shaped into places that offer opportunities for critical self-reflection.³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ Kevin Warner. "The 'Prisoners are People' Perspective—and the problems of promoting learning where this outlook is rejected," *Journal of Correctional Education*, 49. 3 (1998), 128. Print.

³⁴¹ See <http://pepre.ie> "PEPRE: Prison Education and Penal Reform." Web. 02 April 2018.

As this dissertation has already acknowledged, there are many opportunities for practices of dehumanization within American prison culture,³⁴² and, consequently, one could doubt that prisons would allow to occur any of Mezirow's processes of perspective transformation that lead to positive identity formation. Gresham Sykes describes prison culture as a place where oppressive power dynamics are at work in the form of a culture of coercion that develops within systems of compliance. The creation of systems of compliance is normal within a corrective environment that houses people who are judged by society as impulsive and dangerous. The resulting systematic experiences of dehumanization and oppression, while often justified as reasonable punishment by society, do not help the incarcerated to form identities as responsible citizens. In order to form such identities, Mezirow would argue that a person needs space and time for critical self-reflection and reformulation of meaning schemes and perspectives toward positive self-development. It is very easy to see a prison as the wrong space and time for self-reflection and positive identity reformulation outside of basic adaptations to survive and cope with the demoralizing experience.

Mezirow would see educational programs within the correctional environment as having the difficult challenge of creating spaces for sincere self-reflection despite the culture of coercion. When faced with the daily reality of conformity under the threat of increased punishment, people have difficulty recognizing opportunities for starting a transformative process of reflecting on one's uniqueness in the world. When people must face daily

³⁴² See Dennis Pierce (*Prison Ministry: hope behind the wall* (2006)) and Michelle Alexander (*The New Jim Crow* (2012)) among other works cited in this research to see discussions about dehumanization in prison.

condemning and dehumanizing words and actions by prison inmates and staff, it is difficult for inmates to find value in making space and time for discovering humanizing revelations that can develop a person's identity in a positive way. According to Mezirow's line of thought, in order for positive identity formation to occur within an educational program of a prison, there would need to be a space designated within or outside of the prison to which detainees can go and escape the coercive and degrading prison environment. This space for critical reflection can be created through writing projects that intentionally encourage self-reflection,³⁴³ or by the creation or reservation of an area where "eye-opening" discussions, books, or works of art are encouraged.³⁴⁴ While Mezirow describes transformative learning as a process of letting go of one's learned beliefs and attitudes, social psychologists like Ayton, et al., demonstrate that prisoners may have difficulty letting go of certain attitudes, behaviors and outlooks that were learned in order to gain some sense of power and security while living an incarcerated life. While some of these attitudes and behaviors are learned in prison, others are brought into prison from the challenging lifestyles and experiences of a person's life before incarceration. How can a person release these destructive and limiting attitudes if he clings to them as important parts of his or her survival of the prison experience? From Mezirow's perspective, in order for transformative learning to occur there would need to be a space created to which prisoners could go and escape the daily dilemmas that keep them attached to those negative perspectives and meaning schemes and that inhibit transformative education from occurring.

³⁴³ Autobiographical writing was used to create a space for personal transformation in the following study: Shelly Furuness & Judith Lysaker. "Space for Transformation: Relational, Dialogic Pedagogy." *Journal of Transformative Education*. Vol. 9, No. 3, 95-97. Print.

³⁴⁴ Mezirow, 168.

5.3. Is the Logos Bible Study an effective tool for Jericho Ministries to evangelize and disciple the incarcerated?

“New-born Christians need to know how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems.”³⁴⁵ As already noted in this research, this is one of the primary objectives of Jericho Prison Ministries in its creation of the Logos Bible Study. It fits the general view of neo-evangelicals that the Bible is an authoritative source of transformative wisdom in the world. By stating that all Christians “need to know how to relate the Bible” to everyday challenges, Jericho is declaring that all people can learn how the Bible can inform our lives regardless of our status in life. Since this teaching is empowered by the Holy Spirit, the practice of Bible study can announce the Good News and transform the lives of those who receive the Good News. However, can someone effectively relate the Bible to the everyday problems of prison? Does the Bible translate into prison life in ways that initiate lasting change within detainees and institutions of incarceration? The question of whether or not the Logos Bible Study is an effective tool of faith transmission and of personal and cultural transformation is one of the major questions of this research.

When the leadership of Jericho decided to create its own model for Christian education in prison by entering into conversation with the work of James Loder, it conceded that its evangelical perspective that was influenced by Watchman Nee, needed to be expanded when facing prison culture. It therefore followed what Andrew Walls has acknowledged as prevalent in the history of the transmission of the Christian faith around the world: the work of translating the witness of the Bible into terms that are relatable and understandable in the

³⁴⁵ Objectives of Jericho Ministries, Figure 2, panel 6.

target culture. By making its own version of the Christian translation principle, Jericho declared that before the Holy Spirit would renew minds through the Gospel message, those minds had to understand the message. By creating the Logos Bible Study, Jericho was trying to create a practice that would offer renderings of reality that the practitioners could accept over the many other renderings of reality offered and imposed within the penal environment. Bible studies like *The Covenant and the Kingdom* that offered translations of the Gospel message that were for evangelical communities in civilian society and ignored the harsh realities of prison life were not effective, but often condescending and patronizing in the prison context. So, Jericho decided to engage the psychological processes that lead to transformation and thereby create what Jericho would consider an effective tool of the Holy Spirit.

By referencing James Loder's descriptions of the process of transformation, Jericho had to encourage its volunteers to include within the practice of prison Bible study opportunities to engage the realities that brought people to prison and the realities of life within prison. By accepting Loder's perspective that all experience can influence a person's process of identity formation, Jericho endeavored to create a terrain of critical self-reflection within the territory of oppressive incarceration. Practitioners of the Logos Bible Study were made aware of the logic of human transformation and how the Holy Spirit has a logic that can transform our natural logic. Practitioners of LBS were made aware of how it was impossible to ignore the dehumanizing conditions of incarceration by simply telling the story of how Jesus died for our sins. Instead the LBS practitioners had to partner with each other in bringing the witness of prison life into conversation with the witness of Scripture and setting

in motion a process of conversion that seeks the re-orientation rather than the replacement of personal and cultural attitudes and behaviors.

Philosophers like Paul Ricœur and Jack Mezirow would point out that this educational endeavor of Jericho Ministries has enormous challenges to overcome. Ricœur would bring attention to how Watchman Nee's influence in the formation of the Logos Bible Study could lead to some unfaithful translations of the Gospel that dismiss certain prison realities. Having been a prisoner himself, Ricœur would warn against underestimating the power of the hostile prison environments to hinder any attempts to create hospitable and empowering conversions of reality.

Jack Mezirow would underline the challenges of creating a space for transformative critical reflection in an institution of punishment. He would offer that an important part of personal transformation is the opportunity to seek group support of the new identity that a person has discovered through the transformation of his perspectives. Since the consensus of one's surrounding group can be coerced in a prison, an incarcerated group that would validate a person's new insights must "win acceptance of its procedures and conclusions from some larger group."³⁴⁶ This larger group would have to be outside of the prison, however the prison is designed to keep people from connecting with the outside world. The lens of Mezirow reveals that it would be very difficult for the Logos Bible Study (or any Bible study) to create a pedagogy that produces a person with a transformed consciousness who could maintain that consciousness despite the trauma of prison life and the traumatic return to a society whose social forces led the person into the American system of mass incarceration.

³⁴⁶ Mezirow, 76.

6. Is the Logos Bible Study an effective Christian practice in prison?

“In focusing on individual conversion, many faith-based prison ministries neglect the broader issues of how people came to prison and end up fortifying the prison’s rationale of control, surveillance, governance, and vengeance. One way [to stop this trend] would be for faith-based groups to consider how to contend with violence, both that committed by those in prison and the violence of the prison system itself.”³⁴⁷

Once I situated the Logos Bible Study practice within the larger national debate on religious practice in the American system of mass incarceration, I recognized how LBS could be seen as one of those ministries that focus on individual change rather than on institutional change. Tanya Erzen’s above quote could be seen as a measure of the relevancy of LBS that is offered by the domain of emancipative education, which would recognize certain religious practices as successful if they seek to change the larger penal system along with the hearts of individuals. Since the first chapter, this research has acknowledged the intense scrutiny of those academics who see any religious practice (or practitioner) as being ineffective in its work if its work does not include engaging the socio-political forces that support the American prison system. This research however, is within the realm of theology—practical theology—and by using the method of Pastoral Praxeology, this research must ultimately prefer measures of efficiency that emphasize the journey of the individual along with the group in their search to create a practice that represents and strengthens their religious values within a certain social context. Therefore, I understand that if LBS is considered effective according to theological

³⁴⁷ Tanya Erzen, *God in Captivity: The Rise of Faith-Based Prison Ministries in the Age of Mass Incarceration* (Beacon Press: Kindle Edition, 2017), 178.

measures of church tradition, theology and individual spiritual development, it may not qualify as effective according to the proponents of emancipative education and of the political reform (or abolishment) of the American incarceration system. Nevertheless, I press on to offer a theological interpretation of the Logos Bible Study of Jericho Prison Ministries in this chapter of the dissertation in accordance with the demands of the Pastoral Praxeology method. Without neglecting the larger socio-political and theoretical landscapes regarding education in prison and the dehumanizing forces at work in the environment surrounding LBS, I will investigate how effectively the hopes and values of the Bible study practitioners are represented and reinforced within the harsh realities of the prison environment.³⁴⁸

6.1. Effective Christian discipleship in prison according to Jericho

“We believe that...Scripture records the mighty acts of God in history and seeks to relate them to every phase of human life today under the guidance of the Holy Spirit ...”
— Excerpt from Jericho Ministries Statement of Faith

“New-born Christians need to know how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems. Inmates have their own peculiar set of everyday problems to deal with. We need to encourage them to live out their faith, as well as share it with others. Through Bible study and discipleship training we enable [inmates] to develop a Christian lifestyle for the harsh setting of the prison environment...” — Excerpts from Jericho Ministries’ Ministry Objectives

“In the criminal justice community of New Jersey the Logos Program is new and unique because it teaches methods of translating Biblical scriptures into practical methods of

³⁴⁸ Perhaps this research would show LBS as effective in both the eyes of Jericho Ministries and of academics like Erzen.

obtaining a health body, mind, soul and spirit. In dealing with these four levels of self we address issues such as violence, parenting and other challenges...” — Informational Brochure for the Logos Bible Study

In this research I have already cited the first two quotes from the brochure of Jericho Ministries, which explains the organization’s faith perspective and its objectives for prison ministry.³⁴⁹ The third quote is from the brochure that Jericho created in order to solicit support for the Logos Bible Study from potential volunteers and donors. The brochure (see Figure 10 below) outlines the goals of the Logos Bible Study and the structure of the practice. I shall use this brochure and other materials from the archives of Jericho Ministries and compare them to the reflections of those incarcerated men who were interviewed about their participation in the Logos Bible Study in order to discern if Jericho had achieved its goals for the Bible study.

³⁴⁹ See Figure 2

**THE CALL TO TRANSLATE THE WORD
OF LIFE INTO A LIFE OF HEALTH!**

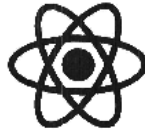
The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) has increased its interest in aftercare initiatives in order to help decrease the state's high recidivism rate. Consequently the NJDOC's Office of Chaplaincy is currently working to collaborate with Jericho, on the development of a statewide "Chaplaincy Network" program. This endeavor has two goals: (a) finding and preparing inmates who are ready to be in mentoring relationships before release; and (b) training faith-based communities for restorative and empowering relationships with the inmates after release. In this collaboration Jericho Ministries is not only helping the NJDOC to find and train mentors for ex-offenders but we are also creating the educational curriculum that would prepare those inmates who are selected for the mentorship program. This educational curriculum is called the Logos Program.

In the criminal justice community of New Jersey the Logos Program is new and unique because it teaches methods of translating Biblical scriptures into practical methods of obtaining a healthy body, mind, soul and spirit. In dealing with these four levels of self we address issues such as physical addictions, literacy, overcoming violence, parenting and other challenges that must be addressed if one is to obtain holistic health.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE LOGOS PROGRAM



**FOR THE
INCARCERATED**

*A faith-based educational curriculum
for those who understand that
the path to true freedom
starts from within...*

A Ministry Offered By

JERICO MINISTRIES

35 Garden Street

Mount Holly, NJ 08060

TEL: (609) 261 2045 / FAX: (609) 261 2145

jericho-ministries@juno.com

THE LOGOS PROGRAM

The teaching style used by this program is similar to the "problem-posing" method of instruction.

- In this method the student is not seen simply as an empty vessel to be filled by the instructor. Rather, the student is seen as a vessel being filled by God's Holy Spirit and the instructor is used by God to help facilitate that process. Just as Jesus was able to help people in seeing the problems that face them, the instructor will guide the students in having their voices heard as the issues that challenge them are defined.
- It is assumed in this style of teaching that God's Spirit actively seeks to reveal truths through the students themselves and the more cognizant and comfortable the students are with that, the stronger disciples they will become.

Each class period proceeds in three parts:

- **Large Group Lecture**—the facilitator presents the topics, artistic objects and the readings to be considered by the class. The facilitator will use open questioning to bring out of the students their understandings of the different issues and lead the students in consideration of God's revelations on the different issues.
- **Small Group Face-to-Face**—the students will be split into groups of 3 to 5 where they are invited to share their own personal experiences of the issues being discussed.
- **Large Group Artistic Engagement**—the facilitator leads the students in engaging artistic and cultural objects using methods of Christ-centered analysis.

Figure 10. Logos Bible Study brochure

Even though Jericho Ministries was created by neo-evangelicals, its brochure for the Logos Bible Study demonstrates how its vision for the practice of Bible study was expanded for Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. The brochure quotes 1 Thessalonians 5:23,³⁵⁰ which is used by one of Jericho's important influences, Watchman Nee, during his evangelical arguments for spiritual anthropology. In addition, the brochure also demonstrates Jericho's adoption of Paolo Friere's perspectives on emancipative education. Just as was noted in Chapter 2 of this research, Jericho decided to have its ministry leaders teach the Bible study according to Friere's "problem-posing" method, where the students participate in the definition of questions and discernment of solutions along with the ministry facilitators.

³⁵⁰ "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jericho does have the same reasons as Friere for such an approach. While he would say that this pedagogical style is important to give oppressed people a voice in their own education and a real opportunity for oppressive social systems to be recognized and targeted for change, Jericho conforms this pedagogical approach to their evangelical perspective on the role of the Holy Spirit in Bible study. Through LBS Jericho states that the Holy Spirit is at work in both the instructor and the student in the Bible study group, therefore, everyone should be given the opportunity to share what the Holy Spirit has revealed to them in order to have a deeper understanding of the Scriptures and the guidance that they offer for our everyday lives. As was demonstrated in Chapter 2, Jericho changed its Bible study practice in a way that has the witness of the Bible in conversation with what the practitioners have witnessed in their lives.

In order for the Chaplain and the Christian volunteers to create a space where everyone, especially the incarcerated, can have the courage to honestly share their experiences before and during imprisonment with the hope that the Scriptures could bring deeper understandings of those experiences, there must be trust. In their impressive account of the *Work of the Chaplain*, Paget and McCormack note that one of the most difficult tasks for the Chaplain (or volunteer involved in prison ministry) is “building trust with inmates,” which is gained by the Chaplain’s words and actions within any religious practice, conversation or activity that would create or support humanizing conditions and would promote “peace and reconciliation” within the penal environment.³⁵¹ Jericho believed that once trust was established and people could share their hearts and minds, then the opportunity for transformation by Holy Spirit could occur as described by James Loder. The traumatic

³⁵¹ Naomi Paget and Janet McCormack, *The Work of the Chaplain*, 66, 67.

experience of prison can put people in what Loder would call a state of “scanning,” a state of mind discussed in Chapter 5 of this research where people are seeking a rendering of reality that can give them comfort and opportunity for cognitive growth. Influenced by Loder’s perspective on the transforming logic of the Spirit, Jericho believed that the Holy Spirit could give comfort and enlightenment through the Scriptures to those people whose minds were opened and sincerely in search of these things. Consequently, as described in Chapter 2, LBS was designed to be a practice where people are invited and encouraged to share their personal stories, thereby creating a safe space for building enough trust to share their everyday problems and to discuss ways to overcome those problems and achieve a Christian lifestyle in a hostile environment.

According to its brochure, the Logos Bible Study was designed to create a space where the participants could study, in the light of Scripture, real life challenges like “physical addictions, illiteracy, violence and parenting” or others. As I have described in Chapter 2, Jericho did this by first teaching definitions of the human body, mind, soul and spirit with certain Scriptures. These Scripture-based definitions of different aspects of a person led to translating the lessons of Scripture “into practical methods of obtaining a healthy body, mind, soul and spirit” (see Figure 10). In order to create translations of Scripture that can help a person to create healthy habits and environments, the facilitators had to have the courage to do what Andrew Walls would describe as expanding the message of the Bible to include the language and experience of the target culture and expanding the target culture to accept the rendering of reality offered by the Bible. One goal of Jericho Ministries is for the LBS to be a tool that helped the incarcerated to see their own lives, not just lives of people in the free world, expressed and empowered within the narratives of the Bible.

In summary, the literature that Jericho published to promote its faith perspective and the mission of the Logos Bible Study expresses two major goals. First, Jericho wanted to design a new practice of Bible study that would encourage conversations between the personal lives of the practitioners and the lives of those actors in Scripture and thereby promote a Christ-centered model of human development. The participants of the practice would need to be courageous enough to take on the task (and risk) of translating the Scriptures in ways that could empower both the incarcerated and the civilians to see themselves in the narratives of the Bible and subsequently seek to create and to express Christian lifestyles within the culture of confinement. Second, the Bible study would have to develop a space of trust in a difficult environment to establish trust. The facilitators of the practice would have to create with the incarcerated participants a safe space where they could trust each other enough to express their personal challenges and fears before, during and after incarceration.

In the recorded minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Jericho on September 25, 2002, there was a report that recognized the Logos Bible Study as having met one of the expectations of the Board. Someone who had participated in the first LBS group was released from prison and shared his experience before a class of people studying to receive a Master's Degree in Divinity at New Brunswick Theological Seminary. He stated that LBS was "an excellent program. It teaches you how to recognize your options and how to choose in a Christ-centered way those options that are best for you."³⁵² His testimony fits Jericho's first objective of encouraging and empowering participants to choose a Christian lifestyle despite the harshness of prison life. Also, in a report to the Trustees of Jericho

³⁵² See Appendix: Report to the Jericho Board of Trustees 25 September 2002.

Ministries dated April 2004 (two years after the start of the program) the Logos Bible Study is recognized as continuing to function well.³⁵³ Jericho saw the fact that LBS was still attracting new participants as meaning that it had become a trusted program among incarcerated Christians—a program where the detainees trusted and participated in the practice’s expectation of sharing personal stories and thereby participating in the creation of Christian renderings of reality that would empower the incarcerated to face the rigors of prison life and courageously form a counter-cultural Christian lifestyle inside a Prison. Those published testimonies along with the verbal testimonies heard by Jericho leadership about personal experiences of LBS encouraged the Trustees to continue supporting LBS as a discipleship program. The references to meetings of the Trustees of Jericho that are mentioned in this research give glimpses of larger conversations that were held around the viability of the Logos Bible Study. I will now consult the 2007 interviews of those prison residents who participated in the practice—five years after the start of the Logos Bible Study—to see if the participants continued to offer Jericho leadership evidence that LBS was achieving its objectives.

During his exchange with the journalist, Anthony demonstrated that he was able to converse with the narratives of the Bible and trusted the people and the space of the practice enough to bring his life to those narratives and those narratives into his life.

JOURNALIST Ok. And when you go to a class like this for example [the Logos Bible Study in the chapel], what’s... what sort of... is it fun to be just with other people? Or what is it about it? What’s interesting?

ANTHONY Oh definitely. You know...uh... fellowshiping with my brethren. You know. And...uhh... just discussing the things of God.

³⁵³ See Appendix: Report to the Jericho Board of Trustees, 28 April 2004.

And...what interests me about this course is: it helps you apply the things that the Bible teaches in a practical way.

JOURNALIST Give me an example of [how] that [happens]...

ANTHONY OK. Uh...an example...Like, the passage that we were reading today: it was about having a healthy body because all of our bodies have a purpose, according to the Apostle Paul. So that means [we are] not to abuse our bodies because our bodies are meant for something. They are not just meant to run around doing whatever we want to do. You know what I mean? Our bodies are supposed to be dwelling places [of the Holy Spirit]. And then we explore other chambers of the body as well: the mind, the soul and the spirit—[in addition to] the body.

... ...

JOURNALIST Did you have similar discussions there or is this sort of new?

ANTHONY Uh..this...nah this is really all new to me! I am relatively young. You know what I mean (YKWIM)? I'm only 19 years old and I've been incarcerated for a few years. So, this is helping me mature. Seriously. [It's] helping me mature into, uh, a man, shall I say? [Which is] definitely an experience to go through. And uh, things like this—programs like this they help me in that experience [of becoming a man]...

JOURNALIST In which way?

ANTHONY Because I'm not going through it by myself. I have people I can relate to. You know what I mean? And we all are striving for the same goal. And that's to get closer to God.³⁵⁴

Testimonies like Anthony's have served to confirm to the Board of Trustees of Jericho that the Logos Bible Study should continue. Anthony's statement that LBS helps its participants to apply Scriptures in practical ways in life was very encouraging for the facilitators of the program as it is one of the main objectives of the practice. Also by stating

³⁵⁴ See Appendix: Interview #17-20 and 25-28.

that he had people that he could “relate to” who were “all striving for the same goal,” Anthony demonstrated that he felt like a full participant in the process of sharing life experiences with others in the Bible study and of engaging the Scriptures with those personal experiences and perspectives. Another interviewee, Alex, offered a more explicit testimony about his belief that LBS offered him a trusting and encouraging community.

JOURNALIST And why are you taking this class?

ALEX Um, At first I took it...to keep it real, like, I just wanted to be around the brothers. I just wanna mature my mind more in the faith that God has called me to live today. And I learned a lot of things about how the spirit is, and how your body is and how your soul is, like I didn't know before. Like, I lacked knowledge of that. But now I can really look into my soul and spirit and really elaborate on what it's about. And I use that, and help me to uh, to uh... How should I say this? Uhh....just to discover my spirit and my soul and to know what is the purpose of it. And now I'm a TA (teaching assistant) and willing to help others from my own experience. You know how they say that experience is the best teacher? So, like, somebody can know, like “if he can do it, I can do it too”. I can set an example just like Jesus set us an example of the way to follow him.³⁵⁵

By Alex being willing to share his “own experience” in order to “help others,” he confirms that the LBS practice encouraged the sharing of personal narratives in order to put them in conversation with the Biblical narratives and with the life stories of other practitioners. Statements by Alex like “experience is the best teacher” and “if he can do it, I can do it too” demonstrate quite explicitly an experience of community sharing and trust within the space created by LBS.

³⁵⁵ See Appendix: Interview #77-78.

These testimonies from several participants in the Logos Bible Study encouraged the Jericho leadership to continue supporting and promoting the practice. A review of the reports to the Board of Trustees demonstrates that Jericho did not launch any scientific inquiries into the effectiveness of their Bible study. Much of the work of Jericho was evaluated according to the continued participation and random testimonies of volunteers and detainees along with the interest and participation of donors. However, Jericho was one of many prison ministry organizations that gained most of their funding from individual donors who were motivated primarily by individual testimonies about LBS. Jericho's fundraising brochure attempts to solicit financial and spiritual support through testimonies of Jericho's volunteers, incarcerated people and descriptions of its ongoing religious activities in prisons. "When you support us financially or prayerfully, you walk with our teams behind those prison walls..." "One prisoner interviewed said that our 'being there week after week encourages trust and faith...our being there helps to break down walls a little at a time, and that each time it made it easier to act like a human being."³⁵⁶ According to Jericho's writings, the Logos Bible Study was effective in its mission.

6.2. Effective ministry through larger Christian theological lenses

According to Jericho's own measures, the Logos Bible Study was effective enough to continue to support but what about some larger measures that go beyond Jericho's neo-evangelical perspective? I will discuss some other points of view about what constitutes an effective prison ministry in order to see if LBS would be considered successful by those

³⁵⁶ See Appendix: Jericho fundraising brochure, 6.

measures. In order to analyze the values of Jericho Ministries and the practitioners of the Logos Bible Study as expressed in their interviews and survey responses, I will use the lenses of authors to which I have already referred throughout this dissertation. In accordance with the Pastoral Praxeology method, I will put the perspective of prison chaplain Dennis Pierce into conversation with the Jericho leadership and with a few scholars who influenced the creation of LBS as well those who help critique the practice in order to discern whether LBS effectively achieves its goals despite the challenges of its environment.

6.2.1. Effective prison ministry as interpersonal

As was noted in the first chapter of this research, Dennis Pierce served as a Catholic chaplain in Joliet Correctional Center in Chicago and I will use his thoughts about effective prison ministry in his book *Prison Ministry: Hope Behind the Wall* as an initial measure of the Logos Bible Study's effectiveness. The observations he offers are influenced by the principles of unconditional compassion manifested in liberation theology.³⁵⁷ Pierce argued that the system of incarceration should not include the sacrifice of dignity, self-worth and the sense of being human.³⁵⁸ Pierce believed that prison ministries should work toward spiritual restoration in the dehumanizing environment of prisons. According to him, there are several essential elements to the work of spiritual restoration. If these elements are present within ministries like a Bible study, then they will empower the students and the instructors to counteract the internal and external forces of dehumanization that exist in prison. These essential elements are: *Faith in Oneself; Humble Service (rather than "heroic rescue")*;

³⁵⁷ Erzen, *God in Captivity*, 125.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

*Spirituality and/or faith in God and Compassion.*³⁵⁹ These elements resonate somewhat with what Jean-Guy Nadeau lists as important factors that lead to the development of any religious practice.³⁶⁰ Pierce's elements, however, are particularly sensitive to the prison environment, an environment where there are subtle and explicit forces that constantly work to discourage or trivialize religious practices or any activities that seek to enlighten and empower the incarcerated. Pierce's rudiments of effective prison ministry also resonate with the objectives of Jericho Ministries' Logos Bible Study. As I examine each element, I will show their connection, if any, to the theology of Jericho whose methods of facing the challenges of prison Pierce would have condoned.

In the development of his rudiments of prison ministries that are relevant, Pierce relies heavily on *The Birth and Death of Meaning* by Ernest Becker, a cultural anthropologist who is most known for his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Denial of Death*. It may be surprising that Pierce chose this scholar as a major support of his principles. However, in *The Birth and Death of Meaning*, Becker (who worked in psychology and psychiatry departments at the beginning of his career),³⁶¹ used in-depth psychological analyses and such analyses are important for chaplains who must regularly assess the needs of the people they serve—especially psychological needs.³⁶² In *The Birth and Death of Meaning*, Becker wrote

³⁵⁹ Dennis Pierce, *Prison Ministry: Hope Behind the Wall* (New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2006), 109.

³⁶⁰ Nadeau lists the five functions of a religious practice (development of one's sense of reality, of one's identity, of one relationship with the Other, of one's community, and of one's ethics) in "La praxeologie pastorale," *Théologiques* 1.1 (1993), 89.

³⁶¹ Daniel Liechty, "Biography of Ernest Becker," The Becker Foundation, <http://ernestbecker.org/about-becker/biography>. Web. 20 April 2018.

³⁶² Paget and McCormack, 19.

extensively about self-esteem,³⁶³ which is regularly attacked by the dehumanizing forces of prison and an important part of Pierce's concept of faith in oneself. I shall consider the meanings of Pierce's four essential elements of effective prison ministry from the perspectives of both the incarcerated and civilian practitioners of LBS.

For Pierce, *faith in oneself* is particularly important and particularly difficult to obtain and maintain in the penal environment. He notes that a sense of self-worth is essential to cultural adaptation. Therefore, if a prison ministry does not address self-worth it is neglecting an aspect of personal empowerment that is crucial to one's ability to adapt to any environment.³⁶⁴ All incarcerated practitioners of an effective Bible study should experience within the study some form of encouragement to have faith in themselves as individuals. For the imprisoned students, having faith in themselves means that they acknowledge their self-worth and desire to work toward increasing it.³⁶⁵ Those prisoners who have faith in themselves can overcome their internal deficits by seeking spiritual methods for responding to various life situations.³⁶⁶ Consequently, they participate in Bible study not only because they hope to learn these methods but also because they trust themselves to have the ability to apply them.

For the facilitators of LBS, faith in oneself means that they trust themselves to participate in the work of compassion that is before them despite the forces of punishment

³⁶³ See Ernest Becker, *The Birth and Death of Meaning* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 65-127.

³⁶⁴ Pierce, 109.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 110.

around them.³⁶⁷ The faith that they have in themselves to fulfill the work to which God has called them helps them to see that while the bodies of the incarcerated may be under the custody of State, their hearts and minds belong to the work of God that manifests itself through Bible study.

The next dynamic of an effective prison ministry, according to Pierce, that helps to restore the individual is an attitude of *humble service*. According to Dennis Pierce (along with other authors referenced in this research like Lennie Spitale and Jens Soering) this dynamic is arguably required more of the volunteers than of the prison residents because it directly addresses the motivations of people from free society who choose to serve in an environment of punishment and oppression. Pierce and other authors allude to the importance of prison chaplains and volunteers coming in to the prison as Christian servants who offer tools of contemplative action instead of heroes offering rescue from punishment.³⁶⁸ Pierce describes the Christian servant as someone who “consecrates his or her life” on Earth to giving glory to the Eternal One before humbly returning to the dimension of the invisible, of Eternal life, where he or she truly belongs.”³⁶⁹ Pierce asserts that Christian instructors (especially chaplains) need to remember that in the prison environment punishment belongs to Cesar or to the governing powers.³⁷⁰ In other words, they are not called to offer legal relief from the correctional system but spiritual refuge within the penal system and beyond. Christian servants must “empty themselves of the cultural demand placed in their egos to be a hero and

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 111.

³⁶⁸ See Pierce, 113 and Soering, 182-187, Spitale, 200-214.

³⁶⁹ Pierce, 113.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 112-115

become a spiritual and compassionate servant who has “resolute faith in God” and a desire to share that faith.³⁷¹ According to Pierce, effective Christian chaplains and volunteers are people answering God’s eternal call to serve through spiritual comfort and instruction as citizens of heaven not as simple citizens of the State whose perspectives are limited to worldly affairs—a call I first heard in my testimony noted in Chapter 4 of this research as a chapel intern studying Matthew 25 with inmates 20 years ago.

In his argument for humble service Pierce offers an important distinction between the roles of humble servant and heroic rescuer. In his argument he refers to Becker’s definition of a hero—a definition where “the mind flies out of its limits in the puny body and soars into a world of timeless beauty, meaning and justice.”³⁷² Pierce argues that humankind creates often-fantastical concepts of beauty, purpose and justice and attaches those renderings of reality to the will, to the selfish ego and to the need for self-worth.³⁷³ Our self-esteem demands that we achieve personal and cultural images of the hero through our works. However, the Christian faith offers that the work of God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit belittles any work that we can do on our own. Therefore, Christians are called to participate in the works of God through the role of servant. This is what Pierce acknowledges as being the call to sainthood. Being a saint runs counter to those cultures that try to connect human self-esteem to the role of hero. The saint has a “resolute faith” in God that leads him to empty himself of the cultural demands placed on his self-esteem and to become “wholly human without illusions, without the burden on the will of make-believe, without status on the

³⁷¹ Ibid., 112-113.

³⁷² Becker, 127.

³⁷³ Pierce, 113.

innocent-guilty scale, and therefore without ambition to gain mortal preeminence over other people.”³⁷⁴ Pierce argues that, in order to be effective, people need to minister in the prison environment as servants not as attention-seeking heroes. If a prison ministry is to be successful, the people involved with that ministry must move from being rescuers to saints. Pierce’s distinction between humble servant and rescuing hero implies that prison ministry demands a mentality of service—people need to be served the spiritual comfort of the Gospel because the rewards offered by society to heroes are not as profound as the blessings offered by God to those who perform God’s missions.³⁷⁵ The mission of any prison ministry is to ensure that the incarcerated are able to receive God’s humanizing love, wisdom and encouragement despite the dehumanizing culture of incarceration within prison that are governed by correctional administrations and governmental policies.

Needless to say that there are many authors who would object to the implication here that punishment belongs to “Caesar,” or, in other words, to the governing authorities, and therefore prison volunteers, and even residents, ought to focus on spiritual rather than political constructs of reality. From Michel Foucault to Mark Taylor to Janet Wolf to Tanya Erzen, there is no shortage of philosophical and theological authors who would argue that focus on the political forces and cultural biases that have created and perpetuate the American incarceration system is exactly what is needed in order to reform or even abolish this oppressive, racist and classist system. As I have mentioned earlier, Foucault has recognized and other scholars have concurred, that the American system of incarceration is designed to

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 112-113.

replicate the process of eliminating the societal usefulness of human beings by taking them from society, and putting them into an environment where their bodies are subjugated, their aptitudes mastered and their capabilities manipulated in ways that make them docile and powerless—unable to return to society as productive citizens but rather as people who have been marginalized and manipulated.³⁷⁶ Mark Taylor would argue that the while church needs to address the spiritual dimensions of incarceration, the knowledge of those spiritual dimensions also gives the church the responsibility of facing the collective political and cultural sins of society that produce America’s punitive practices. Taylor has argued that the followers of Jesus need to be prepared to engage in “adversarial politics” that would challenge and correct the American system of corrections.³⁷⁷ While there are people inside and outside of the Christian faith who would argue that effective prison ministry must include physical and political activism in addition to the spiritual practices, Pierce’s position on effective prison ministry offers that spirituality is the basis upon which all other action (political or otherwise) must begin. With spirituality as the starting point, a person moves from what Pierce would call the politically centered “hero” mentality to the Christ-centered “servant” mentality.³⁷⁸

The next important element of a strong prison ministry according to Dennis Pierce is spirituality. While arguably all of Pierce’s elements for successful prison ministry are based upon spiritual perspectives and values, he takes time to make clear that the type of spirituality

³⁷⁶ See Erzen, 178 and Foucault, 268-272.

³⁷⁷ Mark Taylor, *the Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 97-98, 127-143.

³⁷⁸ “...sainthood demands resolute faith in God, [where] people must ‘empty’ themselves of the cultural demands placed on their self-esteem to be a hero” (Pierce, 113).

to which he refers is a spirituality that is based on God in Christ. For Pierce, people whose values are rooted in God in Christ have priorities which lead to actions that affirm the belief that “God became a human being in the form of Christ to show us that we are loved so much that God became flesh like us.”³⁷⁹ God’s love is at the core of this Christian spirituality and any prison ministry is successful if its practices seek first and foremost to give opportunities to practitioners to increase their understanding of God and of God’s love and to rely on their understanding of that love in their daily decisions and activities. Pierce states that a successful prison ministry takes all who participate in it through a process where “one needs to move from hero as servant, to servant as hero, then servant as human, and finally to servant as disciple.”³⁸⁰ As a servant-disciple, a person gives to others through words and actions guided by the understanding that a person’s relationships with others depend on the quality of the person’s relationship with and appreciation of God in Christ. The Jericho volunteers and the GSYCF residents who participate in prison Bible study have intended to create a space where people can seek a higher spiritual understanding of self, of one’s environment and of God—which follows the Protestant Christian doctrine of Biblical revelation.³⁸¹

Compassion is the last essential element that Pierce addresses for prison ministry in general—and for Bible study in particular. Pierce argues that incarcerated students can find the spiritual help they need to overcome the internal and external oppressive forces

³⁷⁹ Pierce 114, 115.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 114.

³⁸¹ See Chapter 1 of the Westminster Confession of Faith, “Of the Holy Scriptures”. Even though the Roman Catholic Church would not agree with how this confession sees the Holy Scriptures as the final authority for the church, they would with sentence 3: that God reveals God’s Self and God’s Will for humanity through the Scriptures. This God consciousness is what Pierce believes can bring hope to incarcerated people.

that dehumanize them and separate them from open society by spending some of their time in those chapel programs that do not ignore the coping needs of detainees, which is one of the primary goals of the Logos Bible Study.³⁸² Christians believe that God revealed God's self through the person and work of Jesus Christ as recounted in the Bible. Through Christ's life, the world can see the attributes of God that Christian disciples seek to emulate—one very important attribute is compassion. Jesus suffered with those who were poor in body and spirit and with those who were oppressed and cast out of mainstream society. The disciples of Jesus are called to follow his example of compassion for those who are suffering some form of oppressive captivity (whether they deserve it or not). Relying on the Presbyterian Professor of Pastoral Theology, Andrew Purves to inform his view,³⁸³ Pierce offers that when a disciple connects to the compassion of Christ, he or she can radicalize human caring by rooting it “in the deepest places of God's being.”³⁸⁴ This connection to the inmost areas of God's being, produces a form of compassion that goes beyond sympathy or good intentions toward the act of getting involved in another's life for the purpose of “healing and wholeness.”³⁸⁵ Pierce posits that it is this type of compassion that needs to be at work within a prison ministry in order to counteract the effects of dehumanization within prison culture. The abandonment and violence suffered by the incarcerated is added onto the neglect and abuse many of them experienced before prison, consequently any effective prison ministry needs to offer a space for the incarcerated to share their lives and for civilians to walk with them in their pain under

³⁸² See Pierce, 79 and Figure 2 Panel 6, Jericho's ministry objective of “Discipleship.”

³⁸³ Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, “Andrew Purves Named Professor Emerits,” https://www.pts.edu/Purves_Emeritus. Web. 25 April 2018.

³⁸⁴ Pierce, 115.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

the love of God. Pierce contends that the incarcerated are often treated like “lepers” of society who need prison ministers to be the embodiment of Christ’s love who will accompany them toward emotional and spiritual healing.³⁸⁶ By encouraging practitioners of the Logos Bible Study to put their personal lives into conversation with Bible narratives, Jericho gave the participants opportunity to follow Jesus’ example and live a life in the image of God by learning methods of expressing compassion—a form of compassion that Pierce would have applauded.

In summary, Pierce explains four essential objectives of an effective prison ministry that demonstrate his focus on the consequences rather than on the causes of American prison culture. These prison ministry objectives are: (1) to encourage an individual to have faith in oneself; (2) to train people to be disciples of Christ who are humble servants rather than heroic rescuers; (3) to share and cultivate a Christ-centered spirituality that seeks a deeper understanding of God and the guidance of God’s love; and (4) to cultivate a Christ-centered compassion that pushes a person to share and accompany others in their life experiences in addition to sympathizing with them. These four signs of a strong ministry imply that people get involved with prison ministries for primarily spiritual rather than political or educational reasons. Pierce’s understanding of an effective prison ministry assumes that the main purpose of religious practice in prison is to help people to find emotional healing and hope for the future through relationships with God in Christ and with the disciples of Christ. For Pierce, in-prison worship services, Bible studies, prayer groups, etc., are successful if they work toward healing the negative emotional and spiritual effects of prison life and of those hurtful

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 116.

societal situations that lead a person to incarceration. While acknowledging the harsh realities of prison life, Pierce's approach does not seek resolution of the larger societal causes of those harsh realities.

Jericho's prison ministry objectives align with the goals of Dennis Pierce—goals which theologians like Mark Taylor and academics like Tanya Erzen would say are not enough. While Pierce would claim that such objectives come out of "Liberation Theology," they seem to ignore the aspect of this theology that is concerned with changing the societal structures of sin that produce oppressive incarceration practices. In fact in his book on *Prison Ministry*, Pierce recognizes four stages of the Latin American Liberation Theology that he states has influenced his work. "These four stages are: (a) Caring for the poor and oppressed; (b) Investigating the problems, causes, and factors along with the consequences of addressing these issues; (c) Examining a specific point connected with the current issues; and (d) engaging new ways of interpreting the Christian faith and a new way of doing theology."³⁸⁷ Pierce posits that a "Liberation Theology for the incarcerated" would lift up five dynamics of Liberation Theology which could help inmates to cope with the dehumanizing environment of prisons: (1) God liberates; (2) God loves; (3) God does justice; (4) God makes a covenant; and (5) God calls us to follow Christ's example as a neighbor.³⁸⁸ While many people could easily see all of these dynamics as a calling for systemic political and penal transformation, Pierce sees them primarily from *emotional and relational* perspectives. Pierce believes that through prison ministry: God "liberates" the emotions and spirits of the

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 91.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 99.

incarcerated; God “loves” the incarcerated by offering them healing, caring and supportive friendships; God “makes a covenant” relationship with the incarcerated, giving them a sense of belonging and hope for a new beginning; and finally, God offers to the incarcerated “Christ as neighbor,” by making known Christ’s presence as a source of strength for coping with and resisting the oppressive effects of incarceration.³⁸⁹ In his experience of prison chaplaincy, Pierce decided to focus on the part of the ministry that focuses on the pastoral care of emotional and spiritual lives of incarcerated individuals. While this focus falls short of the hopes and expectations of those who work for the transformation of America’s system of mass incarceration, Pierce’s perspective, along with the initial motivations of Jericho Ministries to get involved with prison ministry, are in accordance with one of the oldest objectives of prison chaplaincy—the “spiritual care to the incarcerated [which] is probably as established as the institutions of incarceration themselves.”³⁹⁰

In his book, *Church of the Second Chance*, Jen Soering, an incarcerated author who has published several influential books on prison ministry during his incarceration, supports Pierce’s argument that a servant attitude is a sign of effective prison ministry. Soering writes that while civilian Christians from free society need to ensure that their motivation is rooted in service, the incarcerated Christians would also benefit from such a motivation. In his chapter on “Paul and prison ministry”, Soering offers that effective prison ministry occurred in Acts 16 not only because Paul and Silas were humbly serving God and the captives, but also

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 99-107.

³⁹⁰ Paget and McCormack, *The Work of the Chaplain*, 61.

because the prisoners “listened” attentively to their prayers and songs.³⁹¹ For Soering, the effectiveness of a prison Bible study offered by Christian volunteers and chaplains is determined by their willingness to acknowledge how they share with the inmates (as well as with all humanity) a state of spiritual imprisonment from which the only escape is God’s grace. At some level, the Bible instructors must have compassion for the students not only because of their state of punishment but also because of their shared state of spiritual imprisonment.³⁹² According to Soering, the students of prison Bible study can serve their instructors by listening to them and participating in the work of God that is present within the Bible lessons. Through Bible studies and practices like “centering prayer” both instructors and students of the Bible in prison can develop incredibly clear and deep insight into their own personal and communal sinfulness and consequent dependence on God’s grace that they all have in common.³⁹³ This awareness of their common need for God’s grace and revelation through study of the Scriptures can ensure that students and instructors serve each other by listening with the heart. This perspective leads Soering to recognize another sign of effective prison ministry which enhances Pierce’s position that prison ministry’s primary objective is the spiritual and emotional care of the incarcerated.

Another important level of spiritual and emotional care for the incarcerated that needs to be included in Bible studies or any other prison ministry is the restoration of the trust of civilian communities toward the captives. Jens Soering writes extensively about the

³⁹¹ Jens Soering, *The Church of the Second Chance: a Faith-based Approach to Prison Reform* (Brooklyn, NY: Lantern Books, 2008), 216.

³⁹² Ibid., 182-188.

³⁹³ Ibid., 182 and see Soering’s book *Centering Prayer: the Way of the Prisoner*.

importance of prison ministries having a component that addresses methods for the captives to successfully reintegrate into free society. Throughout his book *Church of the Second Chance*, he calls attention to the many saints within the Bible who had imperfect lives. Yet, despite their mistakes, spiritual leaders like Moses were able to accomplish many things for God and God's people. One measure of success for prison Bible study, worship, etc., is the amount to which these activities equip Christian instructors and students to be able to help their home communities build the trust necessary to give formerly incarcerated people an opportunity to serve free society in the future despite their past actions which may have hurt society.³⁹⁴

According to Soering, Christians who offer effective prison ministry recognize that “no one is just, not one.”³⁹⁵ Therefore, they understand that it is not only important to prepare inmates for return to society but also it is important to prepare society for their return. Christian chaplains and volunteers who do prison Bible studies need to help society to understand that members of our communities who have made mistakes can change and be given the opportunity to serve our communities. Soering points out that Bible students can see an example of this in the person of Saul from the record of the Acts of the Apostles. There we read how Saul, as the Apostle Paul, stopped persecuting Christians and started to help them. This perspective on a prisoner's reintegration into society is reflected in a Calvinist Christian liturgy written in the late 16th century for the occasion of prisoners returning to society.

“We, in the sin of this, our brother, accuse and condemn our own sins; in his fall we all lament and consider our sinful nature; also, we shall join repentance, tears and prayers

³⁹⁴ “Personal relationships and trust are essential for this to work, and these are precisely the areas in which prison ministers excel” (Soering, 231).

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 68-71.

with him and his, knowing that no flesh can be justified before God's presence, if judgment proceeds without mercy... We all here present join our sins with your sins; we all repute and esteem your fall to be our own; we all accuse ourselves no less than you; and now finally, we join our prayers with yours, that we may obtain mercy, and that by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ."³⁹⁶

By acknowledging the state of sinfulness that we have in common with the incarcerated, we can become agents of mercy who give former captives an opportunity to participate in the building of a stronger society. Chaplain Lennie Spitale, himself formerly incarcerated, offers that aftercare should be a consideration of all people who are interested in prison ministry.³⁹⁷ Participants in prison Bible study should be concerned with what happens in free society after prison as well as with what goes on within the society of captives.

Pierce and Soering offer several elements of a successful prison ministry—elements that attend to the spiritual and emotional needs of the incarcerated and that correlate with perspectives on effective prison ministry held by Nadeau and the leadership of Jericho Ministries. The elements offered by Pierce and Soering include God-consciousness, humble hospitality, compassion and personal as well as communal trust and reconciliation (all of which emphasize healthy relationships). Jericho Ministries tried to achieve these objectives through the Logos Bible Study, even if the data from former participants suggest that Jericho did not achieve all of these goals. Nevertheless, Pierce and Soering offer standards for prison ministry that the Logos Bible Study seems largely to fulfill. These standards fall in line with Nadeau's general functions of effective pastoral practices and with LBS's ministry dynamics

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 69.

³⁹⁷ Spitale, 213.

that seek to create a terrain of transformation in the prison—both of which I outlined in Table 1 (chapter 3). For review, Nadeau’s measures for effective ministry are: 1) deepening of one’s relationship with God; 2) encouragement of self-development; 3) development of a sense of community; 4) development of a system of ethical behaviors that support self and community; and 5) encouragement of contemplation of the physical realities of the ministry. Jericho Ministries’ objectives for prison ministry are: 1) actively seeking spirituality or God consciousness; 2) engaging in critical self-reflection through (2a) Reflecting on personal history and sharing of life testimonies, (2b) Putting those testimonies in conversation with Biblical testimonies, (2c) Transforming one’s meaning perspectives in the light of shared communal and Biblical testimonies, (2d) Using transformed perspectives to discern life purpose; 3) Connecting incarcerated and free world communities of faith through: (3a) Intentionally seeking Christian fellowship and assemblies; (3b) Intentional conversations about God’s works of redemption, reconciliation & regeneration within particular prison cultures; (3c) Intentional conversations about the God’s works of redemption, reconciliation & regeneration within the general American culture of incarceration; 4) gaining and maintaining ethical attitudes and habits of: (4a) Humble hospitality and compassion for others; (4b) Belief in (or trust of) oneself to create and develop over time new habits of self-development and of offering an encouraging presence to one’s environment (resulting from critical self-reflection and the transformation of meaning perspectives); 5) developing environmental awareness that: (5a) Acknowledges the difficulties of pastoral practice within harsh prison culture; (5b) Explores ways to use transformed perspectives to overcome those harsh realities. By looking at Table 1 we see that Nadeau’s measures and Jericho’s dynamic objectives can correlate with the prison ministry standards of Pierce and Soering.

Nadeau and Jericho would both agree with Pierce's focus on the spiritual, emotional and relational dimensions of care. Items numbered 1 through 4 on both sides of Table 1 address spiritual and emotional dimensions of the self. Number 5 is more in line with Soering's call for change in the world. Number 5 for both Nadeau and Jericho encourages confronting and changing one's environment and the societal constructions of reality in which a person performs a faith practice. Before I discuss how to use Table 1 in order to bring theological meaning to the interview and survey responses of the inmates, I think it would be helpful to explain other theological measurements for successful ministry in prisons.

Jericho Ministries had objectives for an effective Bible study that would lead to certain transformed perspectives of the practitioners. I will now discuss those transformed perspectives that Jericho believed would demonstrate that LBS was achieving its overarching ideals of evangelism and conversion (as discussed in Chapter 5 of this research). The transformed perspectives resulting from the LBS purpose of evangelism were the evidence of the accomplishment of a terrain of transformation within a territory of incarceration. The movement of bodies through different spaces and different times is the basic reality of prison life. It is not enough for the practitioners to have a transformed view of Scriptures. In order for people, and perhaps prison culture, to be transformed, there must also be a transformation of a person's relations with time, space, matter and people. Jericho, in its creation of a model for Christian education in prison, recognized that certain perspectives needed to be transformed—perspectives on one's environment, behaviors and relations in addition to perspectives on the Bible. In the next section, we will see which transformed perspectives contribute to the formation of religious space that is transformative within the prison—a necessary part of effective penitentiary bible study.

6.2.2. Effective prison ministry as transformative

At this point it would be helpful to revisit Walter Brueggemann's quote that evangelism "is an activity of transformed consciousness that results in an altered perception of world, neighbor and self, and an authorization to live differently in that world."³⁹⁸ As discussed in Chapter 5, a transformation of meaning perspectives is not a passive activity. It requires that a person not only see something differently, but also have the courage to behave differently in accordance with the new perspectives. In this section I will consider several levels of transformation that measure the efficiency of the Logos Bible Study as a practice that fits the ideals of evangelism and discipleship held by Jericho Ministries—ideals that were expanded from their neo-evangelical roots by the influence of James Loder in the creation of LBS.

*"Christians may worship at any time, for all time has been hallowed by God...Christians may worship in any place, for the God who created time also created and ordered space...God created the material universe and pronounced it good. The covenant community ... came to see that material realities can be a means for expressing suitable praise and thanksgiving to God."*³⁹⁹

This quote from the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA), sums up the perspectives on time, space, matter and people ("covenant community") that are shared among many Protestant Christians and can be acknowledged with minimal adversity by Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox faith traditions because it summarizes those four areas of relationships that govern an incarcerated person's life—areas upon which a person must look

³⁹⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism*, 129.

³⁹⁹ Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Part 2: Book of Order (Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly PC (USA), 2014-2015), W-1.3000.

with a renewed mind in order to become an instrument or example of transformation within the prison. The shift of the public from policies of punishment of the body to policies of judgment and correction of the individual gave place for educational and religious programs in American penitentiaries. These programs were allowed in the hope of helping prisoners to change into responsible citizens. Such a change would require a transformation of meaning schemes and perspectives—transformations that do not lead to more bitterness but toward higher levels of enlightenment despite the darkness and despair of incarceration. If a prison Bible study is effective, it will help a person to transform his meaning perspectives on time, space, matter and people so that he makes constructive use of his life while incarcerated. The Logos Bible Study sought to help the transformation of a person and his perspectives toward the development of character in order to counteract the tendency to adapt in a negative way within the negative environment of punishment.

I will be pulling from several of the major authors of this research in order to help demonstrate that penitentiary Bible study practitioners seek positive transformation in their lives from constructive perspectives on time (regularly scheduled time frames of the practice), space (for assemblies of people seeking transformation), materials (for support of the work), and people (or vessels of the work)—perspectives that encourage critical self-reflection. We know that in order to transform meaning perspectives there must be important transformations of meaning schemes (see Chapter 5). While this can occur normally within human development (as highlighted by Mezirow and Loder), in prison, effective Bible study invites practitioners to seek the Holy Spirit of God to transform their human logic of transformation in ways that lead to enlightened hope and capacity instead of discouragement, apathy and

pathology (as emphasized by Loder). In this section, we will consider several perspectives that can be transformed by an effective prison Bible study.

A transformed perception of time

*“Prison is about time... It is not the walls or keys or officers
or anything in the material world that separates inmates from freedom.
They are all symbols of a much more indomitable foe.
A foe named: time.”*⁴⁰⁰

In his book *Prison Ministry*, Lennie Spitale makes the very important observation that when a person is a prisoner of the state, he or she is also a public prisoner of time. For American prisoners time itself is a prison. Prisoners and their families must face the fact that time is slipping away from them while the captives serve their sentences. Therefore, many seek ways to shift their hopeless situation of losing time to a more hopeful situation of gaining or even redeeming time through the practice of Bible study.⁴⁰¹ It is certainly beyond the scope of this dissertation to survey all of the research that exists on time from physical to philosophical to theological levels, nevertheless, we need to include some consideration of this part of reality since it is used by the public as a means of punishing a person. One of the most troublesome thoughts of prisoners is how much time they must serve before release from prison. The most common perspective on time learned by prisoners is the one imposed by the sentence of the State: time is something that is taken out of our control as a form of punishment. Time is a sentence used to trap condemned people in a place of punishment. As we have already discussed, within the prison context there are forces of dehumanization, fear

⁴⁰⁰ Spitale, 13.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 14-21.

and oppression at work, which can lead a person to re-shape his perspectives on his identity. One factor of this identity shift is the modification of the perception of time. This perception is modified according to the person's imported experiences and/or indigenous experiences within the prison environment. As Pierce stated, a person can decide to use his time constructively and increase his education in the hope of not losing any more time in life; or a person can decide that all time spent in prison is a waste of time regardless if a person uses the time to pursue education or to seek entertainment or to do nothing.⁴⁰² Over the years, as prisoners have described to me their wrestling matches with time, I have heard of many examples of time, along with the prison's "meticulous controls of power,"⁴⁰³ penetrating their bodies and hurting their morale. In prison, "power is articulated directly onto time,"⁴⁰⁴ and with regimented activities along with controlled movements, incarcerated practitioners of any religion can feel powerless until their prison time is completed.

"Many men and women are doing 'heavy time', that is to say, serving many years. Family and friends have deserted them. A message from an outside Christian can help that prisoner to hold on and look up." — Jericho Ministries⁴⁰⁵

This quote is from the booklet created by the Board of Trustees of Jericho Ministries as a promotional tool during the fundraising luncheons that Jericho held annually during the late 1990s and early 2000s. It tries to help the reader to understand the way in which time for the incarcerated can be a force that takes away loved ones and leads to loneliness and sadness. Here, Jericho displays in its evangelical perspective that a message from a Christian can help a

⁴⁰² Pierce, 70-71.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 152.

⁴⁰⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*, 160.

⁴⁰⁵ Jericho Ministries Fundraising Booklet, 7.

person to cope or even overcome loneliness. Among other things, Jericho offers the idea that Christians can offer to the incarcerated relationships that help them face the losses that long prison sentences can bring. Of course, this statement can also be seen to presume that all inmates are not Christian and only the “outsiders” are. The implied condescension here has been addressed earlier in this research. It is important nevertheless, to note that Jericho Ministries recognized how the prison system can use time as another tool of punishment—a tool whose effects can be assuaged by sincere prison ministers according to Jericho.

By entering into conversation with James Loder in the creation of the Logos Bible Study, Jericho expanded its view of time. In its creation of a model for Christian education in prison,⁴⁰⁶ Jericho expanded its view of “kairos” time or theological time and how LBS could be a tool for turning the civilians and the incarcerated from their old views of time toward a view of time that is more focused on God’s power over time. Loder explains that in the process of human development, we learn two perspectives on time—subjective and objective. The subjective view is influenced by our feelings. If we are feeling jubilant, then we feel that time is open-ended and will never expire. If we are feeling depressed however, we feel that time has run out and that it offers no more opportunity.⁴⁰⁷ Subjective time runs sometimes in confluence and other times in conflict with objective time, which is the time imposed by society, measured by such devices as clocks.⁴⁰⁸ Jericho volunteers have experienced (and I

⁴⁰⁶ See Appendix: Loder’s influence over Jericho’s Model for Christian Education in prison.

⁴⁰⁷ James Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 211.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

also have experienced as a chaplain), seeing men, including myself, struggle between objective and subjective time.

Foucault is correct in his observation that the prison administration enforces its power through heavy regimentation of the time of the detainees⁴⁰⁹—a regimentation that can cause a detainee’s subjective experiences of time to be disorienting. Count times, movement times, program times, recreation times and feeding times all happen at the same times every day with interruptions only from emergency codes. Since the inmate’s cell and housing unit tier can be places where a person is subjected to many emotional and even physical conflicts, detainees prefer to have movement in order to escape the housing unit. In order to leave the unit, a person must be registered for a job or a program or be allowed to go to recreation. Leaving the tier gives access to emotional and intellectual experiences that help the incarcerated to cope with the often negative emotional events that occur while locked in a cell or while being ordered around by officers or bullied by other inmates while in the common areas of the housing unit. All negative and positive experiences are started or interrupted by the prison’s objective time schedule that is imposed on everyone. It has been my observation that, when a person during the course of one day goes from subjective experiences of time being open-ended (through feelings of elation and enlightenment) to experiences of time being closed, restricted and without hope (through feelings of depression, despair or anger) with the constant imposition of objective time, that person can become disoriented about their memories of the past. Something that happened in the morning could be remembered as having happened the previous day or something that occurred the previous day could be remembered as having

⁴⁰⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 108.

happened that morning. Since time is “the operator of punishment,”⁴¹⁰ time spent in prison can contribute to depression, which can cause a person to distort time and past facts.⁴¹¹ Many prisoners may know how much time is left in their “bids,”⁴¹² but can be confused about the exact dates and times about things that happened in the past during their prison sentence.

*“Nowhere have I experienced ‘time’s thievish progress to eternity,’ as much as in those periods when I myself was incarcerated. The prisoner is at war with time. He can fight it, he can attempt to fool it, he can wrestle, play, pray and waste it all together but he cannot defeat it. The best the average man or woman can hope for is to make a peace, of sorts, with it...Loved ones such as parents, children, wives, husbands, girl-friends and boyfriends alike—are all swept away in time’s irreversible current. They are painfully aware that these are moments that can never be recovered. How much they are aware of it varies with the length of time they are serving.”*⁴¹³

Spitale’s testimony of his own difficult experience of time while incarcerated connects with Jericho’s earlier quote about the state of men and women who are doing “hard time”. Spitale describes an experience of time where the detainee is in a conflicted relationship with time—a relationship filled with loss and disappointment. Loder offers that what can worsen the depression, and consequently the shrinkage and distortion of time and memories of past facts, is unresolved conflict.⁴¹⁴ Many captives enter the prison system with unresolved conflicts and are forced into more conflicts without resolution while incarcerated. Time in this

⁴¹⁰ Foucault, 108.

⁴¹¹ Loder, 211.

⁴¹² A “bid” is a slang term referring to the length of a person’s prison sentence.

⁴¹³ Spitale, *Prison Ministry*, 15.

⁴¹⁴ Loder, 211.

incarcerated environment increases a person's despair and disappointment in ways that perhaps Loder may not have imagined.

Spitale offers in his book (and Jericho would concur) that people who have been called to prison ministry can help the incarcerated to have a better relationship with time because the Holy Spirit can use them as instruments to transform their perspectives on time. For Spitale, "the Christian message gloriously transcends time and space."⁴¹⁵ The message of the Church offers the individual the understanding that there is another day coming and another time coming that can never be feared because they bring everlasting joy. The Bible encourages people to remain focused on this understanding of an eternal kingdom. In addition, Christian volunteers and chaplains in the prison offer the captives a representation of the peace that only Christ can give—a peace that perseveres regardless of time and place. This peace perseveres because it comes from a God who is sovereign everywhere and at all times.⁴¹⁶ Loder would offer that the Holy Spirit use the Bible and Christian volunteers like those of Jericho Ministries to transform the incarcerated experience of time from a losing battle of finding balance between subjective and objective time to "kairos" or theological time.

Loder explains kairos as the "fullness of time."⁴¹⁷ Once a person's perspective enters the fullness of time, that person lives in the world with "heightened expectation of what the Spirit of God may do next."⁴¹⁸ In other words, the person experiences the present as full of potential revelations from God. The person with the kairos perspective does not live the

⁴¹⁵ Spitale, 19.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁴¹⁷ Loder, 212.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

present in depressing contemplation of past mistakes or unresolved issues. Rather the person sees the present as an opportunity to reveal lessons from the past that can illuminate the present and help prepare opportunities for the future. When one looks at the world and walks in the world according to the fullness of time, one does not fear the future but rather looks forward to it as an opportunity for God to reveal God's love in encouraging and empowering ways.

The kairos relationship with time causes past, present and future come together in the “eternal Now” of the kairos perspective. The person with the kairos perspective attempts to live in time from an eternal perspective, a perspective that sees the past as one day—like Augustine. “It is in you, mind of mine, that I measure the periods of time... I measure as time present the impression that things make on you as they pass by and what remains after they have passed by... [In my mind] there are three times: a time of things past which is memory; the time of this present which is direct experience; and the time of things future which is expectation.”⁴¹⁹ Augustine also acknowledges that this profound reflection occurred in his present, making his entire past as one day and his future as a hope. While he ponders these things Augustine asks God for guidance toward certainty. Centuries later Thomas Aquinas would agree that Augustine needed to take his considerations to the Lord of Eternity. From his perspective, since God is in Eternity, even though in time contingent things become actual successively, God can know “contingent things simultaneously” because all things in time are present to God from eternity.⁴²⁰ Augustine and Aquinas would agree that the more humans

⁴¹⁹ Augustine, *Confessions*, 197-203.

⁴²⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. Question 14 “God's knowledge.” Article 13.

increase their relationship with God the more capable they are to “get beyond time,” which is what Meister Eckhart, the German theologian, philosopher and mystic, encouraged believers to do in the 14th century.⁴²¹ In his contemplation of the eternal Now, Meister Eckhart stated that one of the purposes of the Christian faith is to enhance a person’s internal understanding of time and space. “As long as one clings to time, space, number and quantity, he is on the wrong track and God is strange and far away. Therefore our Lord said: ‘Let him who would be my disciple deny himself...’”⁴²² For Eckhart, to be human is to travel within and be attached to time but as disciples of the Lord, we need to “get beyond time.”⁴²³

For the incarcerated individual, there is not much expectation for a person to read and contribute to such profound theological and philosophical musings on time but there can be a real transformation of perspectives on one’s relationship with time that can contribute to humanity’s history of contemplating about time. The incarcerated demonstrates a transformed or *kairos* perspective on time when he no longer fights to remain attached to the past or afraid of the future, but rather sees past, present and future as opportunities for God’s illumination—illumination that brings joy and confidence in the journey through time. The culture of prison is driven by fear, violence and dehumanization. A person can be free of this culture if a person has transformed their perspective of time into one of opportunity—not just opportunity for the ego but God’s opportunity. An incarcerated person, who has a transformed perspective on time, recognizes that the opportunities in time that he seeks for himself, are limited by the self—limited by the relationships and experiences of the self. A person who has achieved a

⁴²¹ Eckhart, 213.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Ibid.

kairos perspective in prison knows that God can use time to offer opportunities that are beyond a person's imagination or experience. This perspective empowers the incarcerated to make decisions and have behaviors that reflect a belief that God can offer an opportunity for growth in prison, despite its design to diminish and/or destroy a person. When a person in prison is empowered to transform his perspective on time from subjective and objective to theological, a person can look forward to each moment with hope, faith and love instead of dread as well as receive the confidence to work toward resolution of conflicts in the past, present or future. Among other things, Jericho's Logos Bible Study was intended to be an instrument to transform a person's perspectives on his or her relationship with time into theological perspectives that can help the person to cope with time in prison and all its implications for loss and despair.

A transformed perception of space

*"We seek to make known, as creatively as possible, the wonderful news of forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus Christ. We are on the ties in lockup, cell to cell, in the chapel doing services, or sometimes crammed in a small room doing Bible study. We bring music and song to an in indoor chapel or an outdoor courtyard."*⁴²⁴

In the above quote, Jericho demonstrates that before creating the Logos Bible Study it had the practice of transforming different spaces in the prison into places of worship and Christian education. In certain prisons, Jericho volunteers were allowed to go from cell to cell and onto the tiers in the "lockup" section of a prison offering words of comfort to the inmates. Lockup is a term referring to an area of the prison called administrative segregation. While in administrative segregation detainees are taken out of general population and placed in cells

⁴²⁴ Jericho Ministries Fundraising Booklet, 6.

where they must remain for 22 or 23 hours per day as part of some disciplinary infraction. In other prisons Jericho volunteers used small rooms that were made available for Bible studies or worship services. In my experience with Jericho and as a chaplain, I have seen store rooms, visit halls and even stairwells converted/repurposed into classrooms for the Christian volunteer to conduct Bible studies. Even though there were rooms offered to the volunteers that were not designed to be traditional classrooms, what mattered most for the civilian and incarcerated Christians was having a space for religious practice and fellowship. Since all of New Jersey's prisons do not have intentionally designed Chapels, Jericho volunteers needed to be ready to change any space provided into a space for worship and religious instruction. For various philosophical and theological reasons, James Loder has written that the human body provides coordinates for time and space.⁴²⁵ Jericho volunteers perform their ministries in accordance with this concept even though they do not do so for the same philosophical and theological reasons as Loder. Every week at the same times, in the same rooms of a particular prison, Jericho volunteers arrive in the space provided to them by the prison administration and invite incarcerated Christians to participate in a religious practice that transforms the purpose of the space into a religiously defined purpose for a certain time period.

The leadership of Jericho regularly trained its volunteers to organize themselves into teams so that once a team was given a timeframe for ministry in a prison, each member of that team would commit to ensuring that the timeframe was honored with services that were in accordance with the designated purpose of that time slot and designated space. Jericho preferred organizing teams of volunteers because if one volunteer was not able to come to a

⁴²⁵ Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit*, 208.

scheduled prison ministry, someone else on the team could ensure that it occurred. Teams were necessary because once a time slot was given and a space designated, every week the prison administration expected that program to take place at the given time in the given place. Therefore, every week prison volunteers would work to get their bodies to the prison at a certain time for a certain religious service. Also, every week, at a particular time the inmates were invited to bring their bodies to a certain place at a certain time for a certain religious service. This is a very important aspect of prison ministry because in the prison, selected areas have programming that is mandatory and every space, every room is given a purpose. Since the movement of the prison resident's body is so heavily restricted, a person's location often determines expected activities. For example, if an inmate's body is in the gym, he is expected to participate in a recreational program. If a prison resident is in the chapel, he is expected to participate in religious practices. If an incarcerated body is in a certain space at a certain time, that person is expected, even required, to participate in a certain activity. The prison is an institution where it is very evident that the body gives coordinates to time and space. It is not difficult for a person involved in prison administration to print a report of the movement schedule of a certain inmate. With this schedule an administrator can see a person's activities and interests based on the spatial placement of their bodies at various times within the prison complex. In prison, I can go into a certain space at a certain time and have a reasonable expectation of what everybody in the room is doing or attempting to do. This aspect of prison reality is different from civil society where people can be doing many things in the same place during a certain time frame. Since Jericho had the administrative practice of using certain spaces at certain times for certain activities, when Jericho created Logos Bible Study it expected that those volunteers leading LBS would follow that protocol. The LBS volunteers

were expected to have the necessary materials and intentions for transforming any space they were given in the prison into a space for Christian education.

Even though a space may be consecrated for a religious practice, one cannot forget that the practice is happening in a prison and incarcerated reality cannot be forgotten. One experience I had while serving as chaplain at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility made me acutely aware of the power of prison administration to interrupt any and all programming inside. I remember leading a Bible study when the custodial staff was alerted that someone outside of the prison had escaped police custody and was a fugitive on the run in a town near the prison. Once alerted to this situation, prison administration allowed custody to terminate all programs, including my Bible study, and send all the inmates back to their cells for an emergency count. I will not offer here all the regulations that would encourage custody to behave in such a way, but this instance does serve as one of many examples that demonstrate how any activity that occurs in any room inside of the facility, can be interrupted or cancelled for any of a long list of security reasons. I also had an experience where the violent prison culture invaded a space designated for ministry. One day after I had offered a benediction to the large number of residents in order to close a worship service, one young man attacked another. As they tussled and wrestled, the correctional officer on post to watch the service called for reinforcements and as they ran in the officer sprayed the struggling men with pepper spray and the other officers yelled for all of the residents in the room to lie on the ground with their faces down. Subdued with pepper spray and handcuffs the struggling men were taken out of a room that, in a span of five minutes, had its sounds of communal songs of praise

replaced by aggressive shouts and demands for compliance.⁴²⁶ Pierce described well such situations when he wrote: “few events in [prison culture] push back the reality of doing time into the background. Constant visual cues in a maximum-security facility remind inmates of their incarceration.”⁴²⁷

Such aspects of prison life invite the following question: Is the perspective of any place in prison truly transformed if the purpose of that space can be interrupted and even disrespected at any time? This is a very important question to which this research can only offer the following response. A transformed perspective can be measured by the person’s expectations of and intentions for a certain space at a certain time. Even though civilians and detainees may understand the possibility that the sacred space may be invaded or interrupted by prison culture, they continue to bring their bodies into the space with the hope of practicing their religion. It takes a transformed perception of space in order for a person to believe that God is still sovereign within prison walls. A review of the works of scholars on the history of prisons in Western civilization, shows that the dominant themes range from fair punishment to programmatic rehabilitation to practices of unjust dehumanization, can obscure anyone’s ability to see God’s loving ministries of redemption, restoration and reconciliation at work in this environment. It is easy for a person to believe that the laws of the State, the agents of the State and oppressive penitentiary culture are the only sovereign forces in prison. Nevertheless, the prisoner who has been transformed by the practice of the Christian faith in

⁴²⁶ Apparently, further investigation of this incident revealed that the aggressor in the attack waited until the service was over to attack the leader of a gang whose members had stolen an item from the aggressor’s cell earlier in the week.

⁴²⁷ Pierce, 77.

prison perceives the presence of God's sovereign power even within the constructs of State punishment and judgment.

The physical aspects of prisons in Western Civilization (especially the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility) are well described by authors like Foucault and a transformed view of these spaces is well described by authors like Spitale. Many prisons follow the "panoptic" model where the detainees are devoid of all privacy and are under constant surveillance by the authorities. Here the prisoners are within a trap of "visibility" where the prison structure allows for their whereabouts to always be known and documented.⁴²⁸ Their behaviors are monitored and recorded so that their classification can be maintained or modified. In this structure their rooms are uncomfortable and their movements are controlled and directed.

This "trap of visibility;" this place of control, punishment and re-education according to the demands of the state can be seen by practitioners of the Christian faith as a place where a Christian identity can be born and/or strengthened. Given the dynamic of surveillance at work within prisons, the big challenge for Christian captives of the State is that they must live out their Christianity in full view of critics and unbelievers every day, at all times. It is consequently a place where "every flaw is observed and very often these frailties are seized upon as evidence of their apparent insincerity."⁴²⁹ These and other emotional pressures created within the prison space are alleviated by the work of Christian chaplains and

⁴²⁸ Foucault's discussions on the concepts of panopticism (pp. 228-234) and reformatories (pp. 149-155) are important for understanding the structure and policies of Garden State Youth Correctional Facility (the residence of the subjects of this research) as well as other U.S. prisons.

⁴²⁹ Spitale, 83

volunteers who are careful to emphasize those Christian themes that inspire so that everyone watching the ministry—from the prison administration to the unbelieving inmates—may see an example of Christian service that is trusting and comforting despite the harsh realities of incarceration. As I have already noted, there is a harsh physical reality of the prison where there is an intentional absence of softness or gentleness.⁴³⁰ Christians enter this environment, displaying gentleness through their smiles, hugs and talk about how the touch of Christ can break cultural bondage despite the harsh environment—demonstrating that the prison environment cannot stop the formation and fortification of Christian identity.

In addition, chaplains, volunteers and prisoners who practice Bible study can gain access to the many biblical testimonies that exist which are examples of God's empowering and regenerating presence in the midst of territories of punishment and oppression. Among these examples is the aforementioned Acts 16 where the prisoners who listened to Paul and Silas proclaim the gospel had their perspective on their place of punishment transformed to a point where they did not seek escape from it when they had the opportunity.⁴³¹ The ministry of Bible study in prison is effective if it succeeds in having a regular time and place (in prison chapels or elsewhere) to help participants formulate and strengthen Christian identities that have transformed perspectives which see the prison not only as a place of physical and psychological punishment but also as a space for nourishing one's positive relationships with God and community.

⁴³⁰ See section 3.1.4 of this dissertation: Spitalé, 87, 88

⁴³¹ See exegesis of this text in Chapter 4 of this research.

A transformed perception of matter

“But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.” — 2 Corinthians 4:7

As discussed in Chapter 4 of this research, in this Scripture Paul describes a state of mind where Christians see the treasure of God’s salvation working through their limited bodies and through other types of matter. Organizations like Jericho Ministries build their practices on this belief. They believe God can use matter in the form of volunteers or Bibles or other religious items communicate the Christ’s works of redemption and reconciliation. As is evident in the items listed below that Jericho required to be used in the Logos Bible Study, the Jericho leadership believed that God could use certain materials to help transform the perspective of Bible study practitioners on the material world. For Jericho, in order for LBS to be effective it would need to help transform the participants’ perspectives on material treasures.

“CLASS MATERIALS

- The New King James Version of the Bible
- Various assigned readings from contemporary culture that address the discernment and development of a healthy body, mind, soul and spirit.
- The Logos curriculum stock of artistic songs, videos and visual artwork.
- CD and Video Cassette Players.
- Notepads, writing utensils, and folders.”⁴³²

Upon entering the prison environment, residents must change their views on things of value because many of the things they valued in the free world are simply not available in the incarcerated world. From Spitale’s point of view, prisons have “a culture of depravation,” where prisoners’ lives and their basic needs are carried out within a very small area and there

⁴³² Appendix: Logos Bible Study Curriculum, 5.

are few items that are placed under their control—control that can be taken away at anytime.⁴³³ In this environment many prisoners can make mountains out of molehills as their view of life is forced to shrink. There are many conflicts over material goods in an environment where people are trying to survive and keep their dignity. I remember when a young man who was on the chapel choir came to me during choir rehearsal to tell me that he might go to administrative segregation because he was going to assault someone who stole the radio that he kept in his cell. This young man was due to leave the prison a month later but he was willing to spend the remainder of his time in “ad seg”. I asked him if he intended to take the radio home with him or if it had special emotional significance to him. He responded “no.” At this point he realized he was willing to fight over a material object that had no value for him outside of prison. Of course, one could argue there was more at stake than the radio. Being perceived as someone “weak” in prison could make the person a target of all kinds of violence and extortion. However, this young man had 30 days remaining from a sentence of six years where he managed to avoid becoming a target. Spitale would say that, because this young man lived within a culture of deprivation, he had a life of frustration where he was willing to protect little comforts like a radio at any cost.⁴³⁴

Practitioners of the Christian faith can offer a wider perspective on reality and help people find value in using whatever material things they have to glorify God. Captives with transformed identities would no longer limit their perception of treasure to money and self-centered consumer products. A perspective that is transformed by the Holy Spirit of God

⁴³³ Spitale, 72-75.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 72.

would treasure having a home in heaven and seeing any material thing that one has as a means of investing in that heavenly home. However, Jericho wrote in its objectives for prison ministry that it wanted its discipleship programs like Logos Bible Study to enable prison residents “to develop a Christian lifestyle for the harsh setting of the prison environment.”⁴³⁵ While Jericho certainly wanted to teach about building spiritual treasure in heaven, they also wanted to help the incarcerated to figure out how to manage material conveniences and wealth in a way that gives God glory, even within a culture of depravation. A person who created Christian lifestyle for the harshness of prison would have a perspective that would recognize as treasure, certain things that could help one’s journey to heaven, like a Bible, which is not only permitted but also freely supplied in many American prisons. Along the lines of seeing the Bible as a tool for a journey, the prisoner with a transformed perspective would also value the collection of material items like certificates of completion for different enrichment programs as symbols of self worth that can lead to unexpected comforts within and beyond prison culture.

I know of one example that made the leadership of Jericho Ministries very proud of its mission to help people to recognize the Bible as a material item of value in prison. There was a man that I will call here “Simon.” Simon was serving a life sentence for murder and started his prison time as illiterate. He started to participate in Bible studies and worship services organized by Jericho Ministries and by other ministries at his prison. His belief in the worth of the Bible increased, as he was not able to read along with the other Bible students. He decided that he would learn how to read in order to read the Bible. He enrolled in the

⁴³⁵ See Figure 2, panel 6.

Learning Is For Everyone or LIFE program at the maximum-security prison where he was housed. He not only learned how to read, he became good at teaching others how to read as well. Eventually, Simon became one of the leading reading tutors in the prison. During the height of his service, a film company got permission from the New Jersey Department of Corrections to film a documentary about the L.I.F.E. program. Simon was chosen to be one of the featured leaders of the program. The documentary “How do you spell murder?” was distributed by Cinemax.⁴³⁶ Simon expressed as part of his testimony that his value of the Bible led him to discover his talent for reading and for teaching others. Also, by making the Bible a priority in his life he was given the opportunity to inspire millions of people around the country while his body was still incarcerated. Jericho would see the success of Simon as an example of someone who recognizes the Bible as important religious material that can lead to fulfilling experiences despite the cruelty of prison. The transformed view of matter that would be a sign of a successful ministry for Jericho Ministries has a person consider all objects under his control as potential instruments for glorifying God. Also, a transformed view of matter would find value in religious materials like the Bible.

A transformed perception of people

“The Christian volunteer is an arrow of God’s love sent to let...wounded sheep know that it isn’t necessary to go alone in this world. Prison volunteers [can teach that] their presence is visible evidence of God’s love for prisoners... Prisoners are not animals;

⁴³⁶ Alan and Susan Raymond, “How do you spell murder?” (2004)
http://www.videoverite.tv/pages/film_hdysm_about.html. Web. 30 April 2018.

they are people made in the image of God... a prison chaplain or chaplaincy volunteer is in an arena where every unbeliever [expects the religious] to talk about God."⁴³⁷

The transformed perspectives on time, space and matter accompany a transformed perception of people. The above quote comes from Spitale's argument that people have perceptions of others that may change in positive or negative ways during incarceration. Spitale emphasizes that religious volunteers can be seen as people who represent God's love. He also states that prisoners can be seen by volunteers as people made in God's divine image regardless of their crimes and punishments. Such views of others influence the quality of relationships between people within prison. Jericho Ministries and other religious organizations who would like to help detainees to create Christian lifestyles understand that such lifestyles are helped or hindered by relationships. At this point it may seem redundant to revisit the views of Pierce and Soering that effective prison ministry is relational. However, it would be helpful here to review their elements of an effective prison ministry and demonstrate that these elements are necessary precursors as well as products of a transformed perception of people. The elements offered by Pierce and Soering as evidences of effective prison ministry include opportunities: to deepen one's God-consciousness; to offer and to teach humble hospitality; to express compassion; and to construct interpersonal and communal reconciliation and trust—all of which promote healthy relationships with God and God's creation. A transformed perception of people creates relationships that allow people to come together and share transformed perspectives on time, space and matter.

⁴³⁷ Spitale, 39, 98, 190

In his research, Chaplain Dennis Pierce is acutely aware of how much the incarcerated have difficulty creating nourishing relationships because of the negative light in which most detainees see other people. Pierce offers a statement that many (including myself) would find on some level offensive: “prisoners do not know what trust is, and a chaplain can surely teach that basic lesson through providing a trustworthy relationship.”⁴³⁸ Certainly this statement ignores the complex social relationships that are created among the poor who constitute the majority of the incarcerated. I have certainly seen in my own chaplaincy experience trusting relationships between people who are cellmates, or friends from the same town, or related by blood and incarcerated in the same institution. Even though I, and many other writers might take issue with Pierce’s statement, it does reveal the importance and the difficulty of creating healthy relationships in a prison where people fight every day to protect themselves from dehumanization and oppression and therefore see everyone as a potential threat. Anyone can be seen as a threat where everyone is separated from love and social status by an environment full of forced compression and segregation, obligatory routines, and narrow-minded attitudes.⁴³⁹ Pierce, Spitale, Soering, Erzen and others would agree that a person who arrives in prison probably has suffered unjust or hurtful relationships before incarceration and the prison environment readily exacerbates the negative effects of those relationships.

However, Spitale and Pierce would emphasize that, a person who has experienced personal transformation while incarcerated will begin to see people as actual or potential vessels of God’s love, power and wisdom instead of as actual or potential enemies,

⁴³⁸ Pierce, 67.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 66.

adversaries, or unsympathetic critics. Jericho Ministries acknowledges this as well: “We need to encourage [the incarcerated] to live out their faith, as well as share it with others.”⁴⁴⁰ The Jericho leadership knew that its important goal of encouraging the incarcerated to share their faith with others necessitated a transformed view of people—a view that recognizes their potential to become instruments of God’s wisdom, love and power on Earth. James Loder would say that people with a transformed perspective would see the potential in other people to have their normal human transformational logic transformed by the Holy Spirit. Loder holds the firm position that human development is dependent upon relations or interactions with others.⁴⁴¹ This is because spiritual development is dependent upon relationship with the Divine Spirit—a relationship that provides the design for human developmental relationships. Loder, Spitale, Pierce, Soering, Jericho would all agree that if a person is going to be transformed in the prison environment, that transformation would need to occur in relationship with others and this cannot happen if one lacks the capacity or the will to see people as potential vessels of positive change.

Jericho Ministries hoped that those people who take the time to participate in a religious practice, like prison Bible study, are living examples of people who can stand against the culture of punishment and dynamics of dehumanization. The civilian facilitators and the incarcerated practitioners, through their regular assembly, can be regularly encouraged to recognize themselves and others as agents of hope and thereby empower the creation of enriching and empowering relationships in a cruel and debilitating environment.

⁴⁴⁰ See Figure 2, panel 6.

⁴⁴¹ Loder, 17-29.

I have outlined in this section the types of transformation that need to occur in order for a prison ministry to be effective. If Jericho's Logos Bible Study could be considered effective from a larger theological point of view there would have to be evidence that the practitioners of LBS engaged in the critical reflection necessary to transform their perspectives on time, space, matter and people.

6.3. The effectiveness of the Logos Bible Study

Jericho Ministries created the Logos Bible Study in order to further its over-arching goals of evangelism and discipleship. In a larger theological context, I have demonstrated that the goals of LBS are in accordance with the expectations of ministry in general and prison ministry in particular. I shall bring Jericho's measures of effectiveness, as outlined in Table 1 (chapter 3) of this research, together with the insights that I have outlined from scholars on the effective transmission of faith inside and outside of the prison context in order to theologically interpret the responses of those detainees who were surveyed about their participations in the Logos Bible Study.

Jericho's measurements of the effectiveness of the Logos Bible Study shown in Table 1 were intended to create an area or terrain of transformation within a territory of incarceration. As outlined in Chapter 2 of this research, the LBS practice was a product of Jericho's work to create a model of Christian education in prison that was heavily influenced by Watchman Nee's evangelical perspectives on spiritual anthropology and by James Loder's philosophical perspectives on Christian education and human development. These points of view, in addition to the experience of Jericho's leadership and volunteers with the challenges of prison ministry, taught Jericho that if a Bible study is going to affect the lives of the

incarcerated and the culture of a prison, it must be a practice that creates a dependable space where people can transform their perspectives on the people, materials, space, and time available to them. If the Bible study is an opportunity for critical reflection, the practitioners can develop behaviors that run counter to the dehumanization of prison culture. Jericho realized that in order for the Logos Bible Study to create a terrain of transformation, it needed to go beyond focusing on the spiritual knowledge of the individual and intentionally face, instead of ignore, the challenges of prison life and life after prison.

In summary, in order for the Logos Bible Study to be an effective Christian practice in the prison context according to Jericho's values and according to larger Christian lenses, it had to offer a *terrain of transformation*. Jericho would argue that LBS was a terrain of transformation because it offered practitioners of prison Bible study the opportunity to translate faithfully⁴⁴² the Word of God in the prison context: (1) by promoting God-consciousness; (2) by inviting people to put their life experiences into conversation with the Scriptures in ways that result in critical self-reflection; (3) by creating and/or maintaining a Christian community that intentionally assembles to discuss God's works inside and outside of prison and that seeks ways to connect incarcerated communities with outside communities of faith so that conversations can be held about how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in works of reconciliation and transformation within prison culture and in the larger American culture of mass incarceration; (4) by developing ethical behaviors that are based on attitudes of humble hospitality, compassion for others and belief in oneself—attitudes which invite people to

⁴⁴² Translation that is in accordance with Andrew Walls' Christian principle of translation that was explained in chapter 5 of this research.

behave in hospitable ways toward themselves and toward others despite the hostile prison environment; and (5) by promoting awareness of the penal context of the religious practice through honest conversations about the harsh language and culture of prison and the challenges faced by incarcerated practitioners of faith. I will now use the responses of those detainees who were interviewed for this research to evaluate the effectiveness of LBS in all five of these areas.

6.3.1. Promoting God-consciousness

“Men and women need to be brought into right relationship with God,”⁴⁴³ is a quote from Jericho Ministries that demonstrates their mission to increase the awareness of God in the minds and lives of incarcerated people. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 2, the Logos Bible Study was specifically designed to teach incarcerated students to recognize and represent God’s presence in prison by contrasting and comparing personal values and God’s values as interpreted from the Bible, along with God-centered goal-setting.⁴⁴⁴ Chapter 3 demonstrated that all of the participants in the World Vision interview said that LBS helped satisfy their search for God. “Why am I taking this class? [In order] to get closer to God. It’s a program that I feel that I need to be in, to help me build up spiritually...God is important...I can’t quite explain why it’s important but it’s an important thing.”⁴⁴⁵ According to the testimonies of the respondents, the Logos Bible Study achieved Jericho’s goal of encouraging and increasing awareness of God among its practitioners.

⁴⁴³ Figure 2, panel 6.

⁴⁴⁴ See LBS program outline in chapter 2 of this research.

⁴⁴⁵ John. Interview. *World Vision Report*, November 2007, quotes #50, #56

Loder would say that in a prison setting there is so much confrontation with negation that people would naturally seek the Holy as a means of counteracting the harm and loss that prison brings. Even though respondent John did not know why knowledge about God was important, he knew it was important, which Loder would say is the human spirit intuitively seeking God's Spirit. Jericho would agree with that train of thought since it designed the Logos Bible Study to be used by people who had professed devotion to or at least interest in the Christian faith. Jericho would also argue that people seek God and will welcome a loving invitation to deepen a relationship with God. Loder would see that in prison, a place where the Void is impossible to ignore, the human spirit can gain a more acute desire to seek God and religious practices like the Logos Bible Study are uniquely equipped to respond to the human search for the Holy Spirit.

Andrew Walls would state that one important goal of those who wish to evangelize or to transmit the Christian faith is to communicate with the target culture in a way that allows people to see Jesus where they are.⁴⁴⁶ As I offered in Chapter 5, Walls demonstrates that the work of translating Scriptures into a culture can risk either betraying the Gospel message by deforming it to fit the target culture or imposing the Gospel without a nuanced approach to the receptor culture. In its search for a model of Christian education in prison, Jericho demonstrated its desire to start a practice that is sensitive to the unique circumstances of prison. While Jericho may have started its Bible study ministries based on its neo-evangelical perspectives, its experience of prison ministry enabled it to see the need engage the challenges

⁴⁴⁶ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 40-42.

of prison life within religious practice, which Walls would have recognized as the Christian principle of translation at work.

From the point of view of Jericho Prison Ministries the Logos Bible Study was a more sensitive method of enacting its interpretation of Psalm 142:7, “bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy Name.” (King James Version) As I have argued in Chapter 4 of this research, Jericho’s interpretation of Psalm 142:7 posited that incarcerated people seek freedom from the “cage” of sin. From Jericho’s point of view, incarcerated people seek this freedom by deepening their relationships with God and Jericho intended for its evangelism and discipleship ministries to help people to do that. The Logos Bible Study was a discipleship ministry of Jericho that was intended to help incarcerated people with their search for God—a search that could lead to freedom from the bondage of sin. As I have articulated in other areas of this research, before the creation of LBS, Jericho’s perspective was limited to freedom from personal sin, and did not necessarily address the communal structures of sin from which people need liberation—especially incarcerated people. LBS, however, offered an opportunity that was perhaps beyond what Jericho had originally intended—an opportunity for those who participated in this practice to discern how their deepened relationships with God can lead them to find ways of struggling against those social structures of sin that created America’s system of mass incarceration.

6.3.2. Inviting people to put their life experiences into conversation with the Scriptures in ways that result in critical self-reflection

From its neo-evangelical roots to its creative formulation of the Logos Bible Study, the leadership of Jericho Ministries believed that “Christians need to know how to relate the Bible

to their everyday problems,”⁴⁴⁷ and it seems that Jericho accomplished this goal through LBS. The data outlined in Chapter 2 shows that the incarcerated practitioners valued the opportunity to share with others in the Bible study (and with the interviewer) their personal histories and life testimonies as per Table 1: Goal (2a). Only one of the respondents (Paul) explicitly mentioned how the class enabled him to put his personal testimony in conversation with Biblical testimonies as per Table 1: Goal (2b): *“I started coming back...taking Bible study and getting with the brothers. And like they say, “iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17),” so I just started building myself up.”*⁴⁴⁸ Respondent Paul describes here his personal discovery of the importance of group Bible study in his life and uses a quote from the Holy Scriptures to describe his journey of the Scriptures leading him to critically reflect on his life. In addition, all four of the interviewees gave one response during their interviews which demonstrated how personal testimonies that were shared with the group had been put into conversation with the Biblical testimonies they were studying and consequently contributed to the transformation of their meaning perspectives as described in Table 1: Goal (2c). For example, Respondent Anthony said, “everything moves a lot faster on the streets. In [prison], you actually have a chance to sit back and reflect on what’s really going on around you and within yourself...when you really sit back and analyze what’s going on within yourself, you look in the mirror and you see what’s wrong with you. And you realize what you are missing and what you are needing...You start searching for God and what He’s calling you to do...”⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁷ See Figure 2, panel 6.

⁴⁴⁸ Paul. Interview. *WorldVision Report* Nov. 2007, quote #110.

⁴⁴⁹ Anthony. Interview. *WorldVision Report*, Nov. 2007, quote #122. See also Alex, Paul and John. Interviews. *WorldVision Report*, Nov. 2007, quotes #56, #78, #100.

Paul, Anthony and the other respondents of this study shared that LBS succeeded in offering them transformational experiences that resulted from being permitted to place Biblical testimonies alongside their own testimonies within the practice. It seems that Jericho was arguably successful in offering a ministry that taught people how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems.

Another aspect of critical reflection, which was apparently adopted by two of the respondents, was the ability to discern life purpose from Bible study. Lennie Spitale offers that many incarcerated men had histories where they chose as the source of the significance of their lives the consumerism, greed, self-reliance and selfishness taught by the streets.⁴⁵⁰ He posits that what is most important to recognize is not simply that many detainees have chosen destructive sources of significance, but rather that detainees, like most people, seek significance for their lives. By inviting practitioners to put their lives into conversation with the lives described in the Bible, the Logos Bible Study acknowledges their search for significance and intentionally offers the Bible as a valid source of meaning. According to Brueggemann, during their search for significance, people will often unintentionally embrace stories offered them, but in the face of evangelism, these people see the opportunity to question the validity of those stories in light of the Gospel story.⁴⁵¹ The search for a new story is fueled by a desire for discerning life purpose. Two of the detainees interviewed for this research (Anthony and Alex), gave two responses each, which described how, within the context of the LBS, they were able to use their transformed meaning perspectives to discern

⁴⁵⁰ Spitale, *Prison Ministry*, 29.

⁴⁵¹ Brueggemann, *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism*, 11.

life purpose—a goal of the LBS described in Table 1: Goal (2d). The other two men (Paul and John) did not say if the practice fulfilled this value in their lives.⁴⁵² In an overview of their ministries, the Board of Trustees of Jericho announced to potential new funders and volunteers that the Logos Bible Study enabled participants to “determine self-purpose,”⁴⁵³ and it seems that with at least of the respondents to this research that objective was accomplished.

It would be helpful at this point to return briefly to the focus of the leadership of Jericho Ministries on the mind that was discussed in Chapter 2 of this research. As previously discussed, Jericho was an neo-evangelical organization that was influenced by the spiritual anthropology of Watchman Nee through the writings of James Gills, an evangelical writer who focused on the mind as the “inner court” or “holy place” of the person that serves as an intermediary between the outer court or body of the person and the most holy place or spirit of the person.⁴⁵⁴ The leadership of Jericho put Gills’ writings about the mind in conversation with the ideas for transformative education from James Loder and created a ministry that focused on the renewal of the mind—anakainosis. As shown in Figure 2.6, the Logos Bible Study treats the mind like a doorway from the external world to the inner person and the level of understanding that a person has will influence what comes through the doorway. The leaders of Jericho believed that the Logos Bible Study would achieve its objectives of evangelism and discipleship if the practitioners were engaged in spiritually-inspired critical thinking. If a person’s understanding and meaning perspectives are transformed, he will

⁴⁵² Interview quotes #20, #78, #122, #124.

⁴⁵³ Jericho Board of Trustees, “An Overview of Jericho Ministries” (24 October 2013), 2. See Appendix.

⁴⁵⁴ James Gills, *Temple Maintenance*, 69-74.

receive a renewed mind capable of not only affecting his personal behavior but also the culture surrounding him.

Jericho's desire to create a space for critical self-reflection was influenced by Romans 12:2, "be transformed by the renewing of your minds." Jericho recognized what Brueggemann discusses: many people are seeking meaning for their lives and during their search they select from competing renderings of reality a story that seems to give their lives significance. Consequently, in accordance with the exegesis of Romans 12:2 that I highlighted in Chapter 4 of this work, Jericho created a religious practice that was intended among other things, to help people to renew their minds through the work of civilian and incarcerated practitioners bringing their lives into conversation with the testimonies of the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In conversation with the work of James Loder, Jericho acted with the belief that in an often dehumanizing prison environment many people struggled heavily against feelings of the negation of one's worth and life on Earth,⁴⁵⁵ and, consequently, they had an acute desire for meaning specific to the prison milieu. Jericho sought to offer an opportunity for the transformation of meaning perspectives that would renew the minds of people who participated in prison Bible study. In accordance with its priorities of evangelism and discipleship, Jericho used LBS to help people to engage the Bible with the perspectives they have gained from their life experiences and thereby actively participate in the renewing of their minds and the transformation of their lives through critical reflection instead of passively waiting for the Holy Spirit to do the work of transformation.

⁴⁵⁵ Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 226.

6.3.3. Creating and/or maintaining a Christian community that intentionally assembles to discuss God’s work inside and outside of prison and that seeks ways to connect incarcerated communities with outside communities of faith so that conversations can be held about how to operate with the Holy Spirit in works of reconciliation and transformation within prison culture and in the larger American culture of mass incarceration

The Logos Bible Study was the evidence that Jericho volunteers had learned about a dynamic in prison ministry described by Spitale: in prison, volunteers have the opportunity to create Christian community with individuals who are sincerely interested in spiritual matters in ways that are unique to the prison.⁴⁵⁶ In his analysis of prison ministry, Spitale gives the impression that people who seek to create a Christian community in prison have some advantages that evangelists on the street do not have. He makes the observation that in prison he is able to speak about spiritual matters at length with people in various locations because everyone in the prison understood that his role was to speak about God. Spitale offers that it would be difficult to find such a place on the street where this could happen because on the street people can easily be preoccupied with things which aren’t spiritual. In order to prove this point Spitale shares that many of the inmates with whom he has had spiritual conversations told him that they would not have given him “two minutes” of their time while they were out on the streets.⁴⁵⁷ The testimony of one of the research respondents does concur with this:

⁴⁵⁶ Spitale, 190-191.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 191.

JOURNALIST	One question I have to [ask], I guess anybody, is this [Bible study] something you would do at home?
ANTHONY	For me personally, I think I would say, No. Because a course like this requires commitment. You know, you gotta commit to the end of it. And being in here [there are] not nearly as many as distractions as there are on the outside. There are plenty of distractions [on the outside], a lot of temptations...

Anthony is sharing that his openness to spiritual discussion and community grew after incarceration. Pierce posits that the boredom of prison life could be a factor in a person's desire to be open to all types of conversations and communities—spiritual or otherwise—since they can help a person to pass the time. “Under-stimulation,” as Pierce calls it, leads a person down one of two paths. Either the person uses conversations and activities to support a fantasy world of escape and pleasure in order to cope with prison, or, the person participates in discussions and actions in support of educational, enriching and therapeutic programs.⁴⁵⁸ Respondent Anthony does not seem to be simply in search of stimulation by his participation in LBS since his response alludes to the need for “commitment” to the program—commitment which arguably goes beyond simple momentary stimulation. Regardless of his original motivations, Anthony revealed that he was open to Christian community by his willingness to commit to the LBS practice—a willingness that Chaplains like Spitale and organizations like Jericho think is present in a special way within the prison environment.

Like many prison ministries, Jericho Ministries considers its programs to be inspired by Matthew 25:34-40 where, as explained in Chapter 4 of this research, Jesus calls his disciples to serve the “least of these,” or those brothers and sisters of Christ who have low social status. Jesus tells his disciples that if they wish to serve him then they must be willing to serve those with whom Jesus stands in solidarity, including those without food, drink,

⁴⁵⁸ Pierce, 70, 71.

clothing, good health or social freedom. The profession of Chaplaincy has historically included helping those in need, from the traditional story of a Christian holy man named Bishop Martin who shared his cloak with a beggar in the fourth century, to those Chaplains of the 1800s in the United States who were charged with educating uneducated inmates, to Chaplains today at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility, in the military or in hospitals who offer religious services, comfort care and counseling and referrals to various educational and enrichment programs.⁴⁵⁹ Among the intentions of Jericho Ministries for the Logos Bible Study was the intention that it would serve to support Christian community among the “least of these,” and connect them with the larger Christian church outside of prison through the churches of the civilian volunteers who participated in the practice.

In Chapter 3 the data from the research respondents give some idea of how well Jericho achieved this goal of building Christian community. All of the men offered at least one response that confirmed that the Logos study helped satisfy their valued search for Christian fellowship and assemblies (Table 1: Goal (3a)). Two men (Anthony and John) offered two responses according to this value while Paul and Alex each offered one.⁴⁶⁰ Three of the men said that the practice gave them opportunity to discuss God’s works of redemption, regeneration and reconciliation in prison (Anthony, Paul and John). Paul spoke of this benefit twice (Table 1: Goal (3b)).⁴⁶¹ In regard to the benefit of intentional conversations in the Bible study about God’s works of redemption, reconciliation and redemption within America’s general culture of incarceration, only one student mentioned this (Alex) and he mentioned it

⁴⁵⁹ Paget and McCormack, *The Work of the Chaplain*, 2-4.

⁴⁶⁰ Interview quotes #18, 28, 54, 78, 102, 110, 128.

⁴⁶¹ Interview quotes #18, 58, 102, 114.

twice (Table 1: Goal (3c)).⁴⁶² Jericho's efforts to increase a sense of community through LBS did not seem to make a large notable impact on the research respondents.

6.3.4. Developing ethical behaviors based on attitudes of humble hospitality, compassion for others and belief in oneself—attitudes which invite people to behave in hospitable ways toward themselves and toward others despite the hostile prison environment

In Acts 16:16-40, a well-known text in support of prison ministry, the “prisoners were listening” to the praise songs and prayers of Paul and Silas and participated in their act of compassion toward the jailer by remaining in their prison cells after the earthquake opened them. I noted in the exegesis of this text in Chapter 4 that the prisoners were touched by the ministry of Paul and Silas in a way that led them see their place of punishment as a place of enlightenment, salvation and compassion—compassion even for the person charged with keeping the people captive. With the resulting conversation of the jailer, the prison of Paul and Silas was transformed from a place of punishment to a place of redemption as evidenced by the change in the prison culture. In the transformed culture of this prison, the prisoners did not act like prisoners. They did not divide their attention between competing personal and communal interests but rather focused on the ministry Paul and Silas. They even participated in a communal act that stopped the jailer from killing himself. They did not act as many prisoners would by running out of their cells once the earthquake opened them. Instead they

⁴⁶² Interview quotes #132, 133

participated in the transformation of the prison culture by performing an act of compassion they saved the life of their jailer.

Jericho Ministries hoped that the Logos Bible Study would help the incarcerated participants to create a “Christian lifestyle for the harsh setting” of prison and thereby work toward changing prison culture in ways inspired by the Acts 16:34-40 text. As Lennie Spitale explains very well, many of the incarcerated put on harsh masks that cover hurt hearts that seek trusting relationships.⁴⁶³ It was Jericho’s hope that their works of evangelism and discipleship through LBS would heal the hurt hearts of practitioners, introduce them to trusting relationships from within and from outside of the prison and gain tools for developing ethical behaviors that run counter to the demands of prison culture. Jericho hoped that LBS would enable people to let go of the harsh masks they created for the harsh environment and learn to receive and to share acts of counter-cultural compassion as modeled by Paul and Silas.

Paget and McCormack would recognize Jericho’s work of creating compassionate attitudes and actions as part of the work of all chaplains—especially prison chaplains.⁴⁶⁴ Jericho had this as a major goal and measure of effectiveness for LBS. According to the respondents of this research (as cited in Chapter 3), two of the incarcerated students thought that the Logos Bible Study encouraged the attitudes of humble service and compassion toward others—attitudes that supported their transformed meaning perspectives (Table 1: Goal (4a)). One student (Alex) mentioned two times that these attitudes were at work in the practice, while another (Paul) acknowledged the presence of this dynamic in his practice four times

⁴⁶³ Spitale, 152-155.

⁴⁶⁴ Paget and McCormack, *the Work of the Chaplain*, 8, 66, 67.

during the interview.⁴⁶⁵ All four of the respondents acknowledged the presence within LBS of the dynamic of gaining and expressing belief in oneself to create and develop over time new habits of self-care along with the engagement of the prison environment with an encouraging attitude (Table 1: Goal (4b)). One student (John) referred to this dynamic only once during his interview while two other students (Anthony and Alex) referred to it twice during their interviews. This dynamic seemed most important to the final respondent (Paul), who referred to it five times.⁴⁶⁶ The Logos Bible Study seemed to achieve Jericho's hopes inspiring compassionate, trusting and caring attitudes and relationships within the prison milieu.

6.3.5. Promoting awareness of the penal context of the religious practice through honest conversations about the harsh language and culture of prison and the challenges faced by incarcerated practitioners of faith

While Pastoral Praxeology requires the measurement of awareness of the environment of a religious practice in order to evaluate the effectiveness of a ministry, many ministries may not consider this facet of religious practice because they are focusing on proclaiming the Gospel message, but Jericho Ministries did focus on environmental awareness because of what it learned while trying to create a successful ministry in prison. As I have highlighted several times in this research, Jericho acknowledged in its work that "Inmates have their own peculiar set of everyday problems to deal with."⁴⁶⁷ Jericho volunteers and leaders know that if a

⁴⁶⁵ Interview quotes #80, 100, 104.

⁴⁶⁶ Interview quotes #18, 26, 64, 82, 102, 104, 110, 116, 118, 135.

⁴⁶⁷ See Figure 2, panel 6.

person decides to practice the Christian faith while incarcerated he would have to overcome obstacles that are unique to the prison experience.

Lennie Spitale and Dennis Pierce both give insights into the challenges of prison life—Spitale’s insights come from his experiences as both an inmate and a chaplain while Pierce relies on his experiences as a chaplain. In his book Spitale wrote that “outside air [as opposed in inside prison air], doesn’t really feel like outside air until you are free.”⁴⁶⁸ Spitale is talking about a facet of reality in prison where a person experiences deep loss and long-term separation from the people, places and things that a person loves. This sense of loss and separation is so profound that even when one smells the air outside in the prison yard, it is not the same smell as a person would have if he were free because everything that a person feels through the five senses is weighed down by the reality that the person’s enjoyment of all sensual stimuli is diminished, constrained and interrupted by the surveillance operations of the prison. Pierce would agree with Spitale’s description of prison culture as a culture of “depravity.”⁴⁶⁹ Pierce notes that detainees are deprived: of their freedom; of the convenient access to goods and services; of the companionship of loved ones; of their personal independence and self-sufficiency; and of their personal safety and security.⁴⁷⁰ Pierce posits that many captive people who are deprived of these things lose confidence in themselves and consequently cannot commit long-term to religious or other enriching programs.⁴⁷¹ Indeed the challenges of prison life that have been mentioned throughout this research affect the

⁴⁶⁸ Spitale, 4.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 88.

⁴⁷⁰ Pierce, 69.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 70.

perspectives of the detainees in many detrimental ways. However, an effective religious practice does not ignore but acknowledges such challenges and along with proclaiming the Gospel, the ministry equips the practitioners with tools to face and overcome those challenges of incarceration that hinder their growth and belief in themselves.

If a Bible study is to be effective in prison, then it should at some point help the practitioners to have a testimony similar to 2 Corinthians 4:7-11.

“⁷ But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹ For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.”

In Chapter 4, I demonstrated how historical exegesis of this text has presented it as an example of the determination of the disciples of Christ to flourish in their testimonies to God and to the world despite all kinds of hardship. In order for the practitioners of LBS to have such a testimony they must have the capacity to face the harsh realities of their environment and make a conscious choice to either succumb to it or to resist it.

A review of the data from Chapter 3 of this research shows that all of the respondents certainly faced the choice of accepting or resisting harsh prison culture while trying to practice Bible study, and consequently, they had opportunities to contemplate the harsh physical realities of their religious practice. However, only two of the respondents saw Goal 5a of Table 1 pertinent enough in their minds to mention during their interviews that there was a place for discussing this within LBS. One student (Alex) mentioned this dynamic three times

during his interview while another (John) mentioned it once.⁴⁷² Also, only two of the students (Alex and Paul) mentioned one time during their interviews how LBS enabled them to explore and express ways to use their transformed perspectives to overcome the harsh realities of imprisonment (Table 1: Goal (5b)).⁴⁷³ While the responses indicate that acknowledgement of the harsh realities surrounding the Logos Bible Study were a part of the religious practice, it was not as heavily emphasized as other goals of the practice.

It would be helpful to revisit the overview of the responses from Chapter 3 here in order to continue to explore whether LBS succeeded in creating a theological terrain of transformation within a political territory of incarceration. As I have already noted, out of the 54 responses recorded by all of the interviewees, the highest numbers of responses recorded along the lines of Nadeau's goals for pastoral practices were the following: deepening one's relationship with God; encouraging the development of self; developing a sense of community; and developing a system of ethical behaviors that support self and community. More specifically, among the dynamics valued by the respondents that can create terrains of transformation in the prison environment and make prison ministries effective, those which were most recognized by the respondents were: actively seeking God consciousness; reflecting on personal histories and sharing of life testimonies; intentionally seeking Christian fellowship and assemblies; and belief in oneself to create and develop over time new habits of self-development and of offering an encouraging presence to one's environment. So it seems that to some extent, Jericho achieved its goals for effective prison ministry through LBS, although

⁴⁷² Interview quote #84, 128, 130, 132.

⁴⁷³ Interview quote #132, 135.

there are still certain dynamics that could be improved—including the connection of incarcerated Christians with churches in civil society along with offering the tools for engaging the environment of the practice.

Jericho's values of evangelism and discipleship in prison along with its search for a model of Christian education in prison by putting the works of James Loder, Watchman Nee, James Gills and Paolo Freire into conversation with each other, led to the creation of the Logos Bible Study—a religious practice that effectively made space in prison for profound transformation of a person's perspectives on time, space, matter and people. Through the Logos Bible Study, Jericho demonstrated that the practice of studying the Bible in a group is effective if the student does not see it only as a means to reflect on Christ, but also as a tool for critical reflection on the self and on the environment. As I have stated in Chapter 2, the basic goals of those who participate in prison Bible study are to increase biblical literacy and to offer opportunities for personal transformation in the power of the Holy Spirit. Historically many evangelical Christians who do prison ministry have hoped that if these goals are accomplished, then they can help change prison culture and also give detainees the wisdom, courage and opportunities needed to return to their communities and help change the oppressive, biased and violent social dynamics that give rise to mass incarceration in America. I have shown that within the harsh prison environment, increased Bible literacy is not enough to change the culture of prison, nor the larger societal forces that produced this culture. As I have noted in my considerations about the motivations of Jericho, the leadership of this organization did make an intentional attempt to create a religious practice that went beyond their usual prison ministry strategies. The Logos Bible Study endeavored to initiate cultural transformation through a Bible study that encouraged renewal of the mind through personal

reflection and transformation. It would be helpful at this point to discuss how the Logos Bible Study could be seen as a Bible study that created a terrain of transformation that is uniquely different from what Bible studies in free society could create.

6.4. The Logos Bible Study: a religious practice that offers a unique opportunity for spiritual renewal in prison

I have already presented that the leadership of Jericho hoped that if there was intentional work in a Bible study to give to the practitioner tools for critical self-reflection, the practitioner could experience a transformation of meaning perspectives despite the hindrances of oppressive prison culture. As I noted earlier, Jericho saw its practice of prison Bible study as not just an opportunity to reflect on Christ, but also as an opportunity to reflect on the self and on one's environment. Using the lenses of Mezirow and Loder, we can see the Logos Bible Study as a practice that could cause the transformation of meaning schemes⁴⁷⁴ regarding the content or process of problem solving. If LBS gains and maintains a space for critical reflection, the transformation of meaning schemes, which can be an everyday occurrence through daily reflection on minor dilemmas, can lead to the less frequent and more important, transformation of meaning perspectives.⁴⁷⁵ While Mezirow would believe that this transformation could happen without religious programming, Loder would argue that what is needed in the prison environment is a transformation of the human's natural transformation grammar to ensure that enlightened transformation occurs instead of negative adaptation.

⁴⁷⁴ Or assumptive beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions.

⁴⁷⁵ Or a person's structure of habitual sets of expectations that create frames of reference for interpreting and evaluating experiences

Loder would say that Christian education through the study of the Word of God is a practice that can lead practitioners to receive the Holy Spirit's transformational logic.

Loder would agree with Mezirow that religion is not necessary for the transformation of meaning perspectives. However, Loder would also say that even though the Holy Spirit can transform a person's transformational logic without religion, the Spirit could also use religious practices as instruments of transformation in a systematic way. In American prisons, religious practices are systematically provided time, space, materials and people by law. So even though the Holy Spirit can do the work of transforming the transformational logic of detainees without religious structures, the Spirit and the detainees have regular opportunities to engage in the work of transformation within the religious programming of the prison.

From Loder's perspective the prison environment of punishment can cause many people to wrestle with the Void, or Negation—the fear of loss and death—that can hinder a person's ability to grow and develop during and after the experience of incarceration. The prisoner must deal with the daily reality that his sentence takes away his time in the free world—time his life will never get back. There is much opportunity in prison for fear to consume people with the realities of loss, violence, dehumanization and judgment. In the face of this, Loder would offer that the dimension of the Holy could transform a person's perspectives so that religious practice can nourish a person's development despite incarceration in the following ways. The Holy Spirit of God can help an incarcerated person: to see himself redeeming the time he has lost; to transform space and matter in prison into instruments for God's glory; to opportunities to deepen his relationship with God; and to enrich his personal character and surrounding community through the power of Christ. All of

these perspectives are covered in the measures of an effective ministry—all of which acknowledged and achieved to some extent in the Logos Bible Study.

In my experience as a prison chaplain, I have seen many incarcerated men register for Bible study classes in the hope of doing things better and of having better outcomes in life—they receive the hope to achieve this by reading scriptures that offer renderings of reality that can at least help them cope with the reality of prison and at most empower them to change that reality. People become practitioners of Bible study while incarcerated because they are hopeful that the study will guide them to a better life inside prison and back in their home communities. While a human being is normally adaptable to almost any situation and, as Mezirow has offered, can naturally transform himself within challenging environments like a prison, authors like Pierce offer that whether such a transformation goes in a positive way or a negative way depends on the personal understandings that a person brings to and obtains within the prison experience and whether the person decides out of fear to contribute in some way to the oppressive environment (e.g., through apathetic and selfish attitudes or depression or violent behavior). The responses of those incarcerated practitioners who were interviewed seem to support Loder's perspective on how the Holy Spirit of God—working through the Holy Scriptures—can transform a person's logic of transformation, even in an environment of punishment where there are forces working against a person finding the time, space, materials and people necessary for critical self-reflection and positive transformation.

During her interviews with incarcerated participants in the Logos Bible Study, the journalist found out that all of the interviewees were incarcerated for violent crimes against others. One of the four was incarcerated for manslaughter and robbery while the other three all had convictions along the lines of robbery, assault and kidnapping. Arguably, they all

came to prison with experiences that could have predisposed them to adapting to the prison environment in ways that contributed to the violent forces of the milieu. However, they all spoke about how the practice helped them to discover and develop ethical attitudes and behaviors of humble hospitality, compassion, and belief in themselves to create and nourish habits of developing and sharing an encouraging presence in a discouraging prison environment. Loder would offer that the Holy Spirit used their religious practice to transform not only their perspectives on the practice but also their perspectives on their lives prior to and during prison. All of the respondents in this research project stated that they came to the Logos Bible study with a desire to actively seek the presence of and a relationship with God but one respondent (Paul), admitted that the first time he started the practice he did not complete it because he “wasn’t really ready.”⁴⁷⁶ The practice did not fit his frameworks of meaning so he let it go. However, the Holy Spirit started the work of transforming his perspectives during his brief time in the practice and continued that work during his time of withdrawal from it. The process of transformation within him eventually got him to a point of deciding to return to the practice and in his words he “drained it,” or got everything he could out of it because at the point of his return, his “heart was in it”—so much so that he started to invite others to the practice.⁴⁷⁷ In their interviews, all of the respondents shared how the practice enabled them to engage in critical self-reflection by: inviting them to reflect on their personal histories and to share life testimonies; bringing them an experience of transforming their meaning perspectives in light of shared personal testimonies with the study of Biblical

⁴⁷⁶ See Appendix: Paul. Interview. *WorldVision Report*, Nov. 2007, quote #108

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., quote #110

testimonies; and teaching them to use their transformed perspectives in order to discern life purpose.

The respondents shared that the experiences of critical reflection offered by the practice helped them reframe their view of incarceration from lost time to redeemed time. Instead of seeing the whole prison as a territory of punishment, they saw the possibility of creating terrains of positive transformation within that territory. Instead of spending time only in search of materials for selfish pleasure that could make their time in prison easier, they sought to find and use materials that could give God glory. Instead of seeing other people as either enemies or as targets of exploitation, they were able to recognize and connect with people as instruments of God's work of reconciliation and restoration in prison. Loder would argue that their search for God brought about a spiritual transformation that made them agents of hope in an arguably hopeless place.

Of course, this space for spiritual transformation depends heavily on how the scriptures are translated in the prison context. Consequently we will look at this dynamic specifically through lenses of Andrew Walls, Paul Ricœur and the practitioners of the Logos Bible Study. As we established in Chapter 5, the practice of Bible study can be a practice of translation where the student seeks to translate the Holy Scriptures into his surrounding culture. Paul Ricœur and Andrew Walls showed us earlier that the practice of translation is risky because it is possible to betray the source text while trying to satisfy the demands of the target culture. Walls would say consequently that the goal of any prison Bible study should be to translate the Scriptures in a way that makes Jesus Christ alive in the incarcerated culture of the students.

Walls and Ricœur would agree that the Logos Bible Study does give a hospitable translation of the Bible in prison since it does what would be required for such a translation to occur in the Bible. For example, the translation of the Logos inside the incarcerated world must be in accordance with translations that occur in the free world. This is assured in LBS by the chaplain bringing in Christian volunteers who facilitate the Bible study with discussions that ensure frank engagement of the surrounding culture with Biblical testimonies without deforming the Gospel. For example, Bible studies should not hide the stories about Jesus having bold encounters with enemies and yet having steadfast love for them even though, for many incarcerated people, enemies should not be loved but rather controlled or destroyed. While the Bible study can certainly deal with the everyday trials of incarceration it should also maintain its focus on the person and work of Jesus as recounted in the Scriptures.

Also, as discussed in Chapter 5 of this research, according to Walls' Christian translation principle, the effective translation of scriptures in prison should lead to a form of conversion in the practitioners and in the environment where no thoughts, ideas or structures are replaced but rather, existing thinking structures and cultural forces are reoriented. An effective translation of the Holy Scriptures can reorient people toward relationships with time, space, matter and people that encourage the development of Christian identity and ethics within prison. The following quotes of the respondents seem to support that the Logos Bible Study, at least in part, effectively offered opportunities for transformative translations of Scriptures.

*“God brings you to His light according to His mercy, His grace. And He helps you to see things that you didn’t see so you could bring that grace to help others...”*⁴⁷⁸

*“Obviously this [Bible study] class, this chapel and the brothers here definitely do not represent what people think is going on in the jail system. ... There are people here who are trying to prepare themselves for a better life and will not be repeat offenders and will not come back. You know? These are the brothers that really are taking the time to come down here [to the chapel and also] to do college courses—preparing themselves so that when they get out there [in society] they have a foundation they can step on. You know? ... I just want the people to know that everybody in jail is not the ‘criminal, convict, hardened criminal’ who is always coming back. No. You got people here who have committed one wrong in their life and are actually trying to move on.”*⁴⁷⁹

The interviews of the young men who participated in LBS confirm the reorientation of personal perspectives toward environmental structures and that the men were able to reflect on how God was doing transformative work in the prison through Bible study. The respondents offered the highest number of remarks in the areas of deepening relationship with God; self-reflection; transformation of perspectives under inspiration of the Scriptures; seeking Christian fellowship; and developing a hopeful presence in the prison environment.⁴⁸⁰ Their testimonies show that during their practice of Bible study, they experienced a transformation of their personal perspectives on life-purpose within prison.

The chaplain, volunteers and incarcerated practitioners were all instruments of the transformation by working to reveal those enlightened perspectives on reality that were discussed in earlier in this Chapter. In regard to facilitating a transformed perception of time,

⁴⁷⁸ Alex. Interview, quote #133

⁴⁷⁹ Paul. Interview, quote #135

⁴⁸⁰ See Appendix 2.

the chaplaincy team coordinated with each other in order to be consistent with the time of the practice on the Garden State Youth Correctional Facility Movement Sheet thereby showing the detainees that there was a time that could be set aside consistently in their lives for critical reflection. In regard to facilitating a transformed perception of space, chaplain and volunteers worked with prison administration to maintain the chapel as a designated space for spiritual transformation and growth proving to the residents that any space can be reoriented toward spiritual reflection. In regard to facilitating a transformed perception of matter, the chaplaincy team worked to bring in materials (Bibles, Bible commentaries, etc.) that contributed to the goals of the practice and consistently demonstrated to the residents that matter in prison is not only to be exploited but can be used to encourage and enlighten. Finally, in regard to promoting a transformed perception of people, the chaplaincy staff and volunteers compassionately brought their own stories alongside the stories of the incarcerated and into conversation with biblical stories so that prison residents and non-residents can develop models and tools for building relationships with those people who can be instruments of God's hospitality even in a hostile environment.

For the leadership of Jericho Ministries, the transformed perspectives of those practitioners of the Logos Bible Study at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility offer a testimony to how the Holy Spirit could use LBS as an instrument of spiritual transformation in a particular way within the hostile environment of prison life.

6.5. The Logos Bible Study as a space for Anakainosis-Desmios

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” — Romans 12:2 (NRSV)

As discussed in Chapter 4, Romans 12:2 describes the renewal of the mind that Jericho Ministries had as a primary goal of its Bible studies in prison. After gaining experience in prison ministry, the leadership of Jericho recognized that it needed to create a Bible study that intentionally recognized the prison environment. Jericho shifted focus away from Bible studies that reflected its neo-evangelical values like the Bible study mentioned in Chapter 2 called the *Covenant and the Kingdom*, in order to create a model for Christian education in prison and the Logos Bible Study. Jericho wanted LBS to be an instrument of the Holy Spirit in bringing about anakainosis or renewal of the mind in a way particular to prison ministry. Jericho’s Board of Trustees believed that since inmates had to face life issues that differed from issues that people face in the free society, there needed to be a way for Jericho’s volunteers to participate in a religious practice that put the Bible into conversation with those particular issues. By putting the stories of the practitioners into conversation with Biblical stories, the LBS practitioners were able to discern renderings of reality that gave hope within the bleak reality of prison life. Arguably, the LBS practitioners used what Andrew Walls would call the Christian principle of translation and engaged in a sort of evangelism that reoriented the conditions, language and attitudes of certain incarcerated individuals toward the expression of hopeful and hospitable messages from the Gospel. While throughout history Christians have offered many testimonies about renewal of the mind and transformed

perspectives, the way in which it happened in prison is arguably unique. Unlike many Christians in America who can expect that a renewal of their minds could bring about significant change in their circumstances, an incarcerated person does not necessarily expect his situation of incarceration to be changed. Nevertheless, the young respondents of this research decided to continue their Logos Bible Study practice regardless of their incarcerated situation. These young men decided to stand against the dominant culture of punishment, violence and dehumanization and demonstrate a renewal of the mind that might arguably only occur in prison. Perhaps the Logos Bible Study was a religious practice that created a space for Anakainosis-Desmios. I shall close chapter 6 by introducing Anakainosis-Desmios as a type of spiritual renewal made possible by the practice of the Logos Bible Study.

In 1787, Jeremy Bentham wrote a series of letters on the Panopticon that were famously interpreted by Michel Foucault in the 1970s to make clear a penal philosophy that has influenced the policies of penitentiaries and correctional systems in Western civilization for almost 250 years. All of the authors that we have referenced in this research have shown that society has a need to correct those individuals with dangerous behaviors—a need that creates policies that can produce oppressive and violent prison cultures. While we have certainly given a detailed description of the challenges faced by those who practice Bible study in prison culture, at this point we need to emphasize one particular element of the prison system that Bentham proposed as a “fundamental advantage:” the use of policies and technologies of constant surveillance and scrutiny by the prison administration and by all those who empower it. Bentham’s vision of a circular building of prison cells with an

observation tower at its center was the architectural expression of a penal philosophy of surveillance.⁴⁸¹

According to Bentham's perspective, an institution could ensure the fulfillment of society's goals of separation, labor and instruction for detainees by having a building with the architecture and/or policies that facilitate continuous observation and evaluation of prisoner activities and attitudes. The surveillance system could have at least the appearance of consistency because many people can assist the prison director in the duties of inspection and evaluation through the use of a central observation tower and/or policies of examination of prisoner movements, programs and progress on intellectual and behavioral levels. Bentham further proposed that since anyone can see the prisoners' cells and movement around the prison from the vantage point of the observation tower, even those people whose directives the director executes can come to observe the workings of the prison without necessarily going into the prisoner housing units and programming areas (these people include the judges who give out prison sentences on behalf of society and the government representatives who empower the judges). The captive of the penitentiary faces the constant feeling of being observed and evaluated for strengths and weaknesses by prison staff and by other captives. We have established these facts about prison culture already, but we consider these points again in order to emphasize one particular consequence of these conditions. In the coercive and scrutinizing Panopticon, no resident can feel "at home" because they must live within what Foucault calls: a "trap of visibility."⁴⁸²

⁴⁸¹ Jeremy Bentham. "Panopticon" (England, Lincoln's Inn. 1787), Letter VI.

⁴⁸² Foucault, 234.

It is within this prison of visibility that the transformative work of the Logos Bible Study has been occurring, despite the many opportunities for incarcerated practitioners to blend into their negative environment. Critical self-reflection and the constructive transformation of perspectives have been able to occur for them largely because of the ways in which those caught within the prison culture of surveillance translate the Holy Scriptures and participate in the practice of Bible study. The incarcerated practitioners seemed to employ a style of biblical hermeneutics that make a significant contribution to the transformed perspectives of those incarcerated practitioners of Bible study who were interviewed. The interview and follow-up survey point to a dynamic of biblical hermeneutics at work in the Logos Bible Study that I will discuss at length in the next chapter. This dynamic is *Anakainosis-Desmios* or spiritual renewal and encouragement for the incarcerated. By using the term “*Desmios*” I am taking into account all of a person’s experiences of the harsh prison realities of surveillance and coercion to which I have referred throughout this research—realities that result from policies in western prison systems of using coercive methods intended to correct and bring individuals to regret their crimes against the State. As discussed in chapter 4, “*Anakainosis*” is a Greek word that has taken on profound meaning in Christian theology. It is the word for “renovation or renewal.”⁴⁸³ Theologically it is seen as the phenomenon of spiritual renewal or a change of heart in life that achieved by God’s power.⁴⁸⁴ In summary, *Anakainosis-Desmios* occurs when a person who resides in an environment of

⁴⁸³ Perschbacher, Wesley J., ed., *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*. Massachusettes: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1990. Print. “ἀνακαίνωσις”

⁴⁸⁴ Biblehub.com. *Strong’s Concordance Online*. Strong’s Concordanc, 2016. Web. 16 August 2016. 342. *Anakainosis*.

surveillance and scrutiny has his consciousness renewed in such a way that his behaviors and attitudes do not fall in line with those behaviors and attitudes that are expected of those who reside in a prison. In other words, a spiritually renewed detainee will express hospitality rather than hostility, compassion rather than coercion, and enlightenment rather than ignorance. This renewal of the mind is made manifest by practitioners of prison Bible study who express an awareness of the prison environment and a willingness to engage that environment with their transformed relationships with time, space, matter and people.

In its work toward making the Logos Bible Study an effective practice of Bible study at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility, Jericho received testimonies about renewal of people's minds in prison—renewal that was evidenced by continued commitment to the practice of LBS. *Anakainosis-Desmios* or spiritual renewal in prison occurred within the space of LBS practice where an incarcerated person's meaning perspectives were transformed so that from the point of view of the practitioners, the place of punishment that surrounded them could be changed into a place of redemption, regeneration and restoration. As described in Jens Soering's commentary on the story of Paul and Silas in prison in Acts 16 (that was mentioned in Chapter 4 of this research), the prison and the prisoners no longer behaved in the ways they were expected after the light of God had transformed their perceived purposes. Soering explains that instead of escaping the prison like captives when they had the opportunity, the detainees in Acts 16 made a decision like free men with renewed hearts to stay with Paul and Silas in a prison that had been in their view transformed into a place of spiritual renewal. Such is the testimony that was arguably offered by the respondents of this research who participated in the Logos Bible Study. These men who demonstrated a renewed

mind confirmed for Jericho that they had succeeded in creating an effective practice of prison Bible study, a Bible study that could inspire Anakainosis-Desmios.

There are many who would find this concept of Anakainosis-Desmios quite problematic. Scholars like Tanya Erzen who seek prison reform from a secular point of view would see this idea as a justification of those evangelicals who believe that doing religious activities in prison is enough and the engagement of the social and political forces that drive America's system of mass incarceration unnecessary. Why seek to change those forces that have created a prison system that God can use to renew the hearts and minds of the incarcerated? No matter how unjust the system of incarceration is, God can still save souls! Erzen has written extensively about how evangelicals with such attitudes are increasing their presence in prisons but are missing opportunities to change a system that falls short of its goals of rehabilitation and correction while focusing its powers disproportionately on the poor and on people of color.

Theologians like Mark Taylor would argue that Anakainosis-Desmios is an ironic theological term that risks portraying God as a supporter of American mass incarceration because it sets the stage for a special renewal of the mind. Taylor, along with many liberation theologians like James Cone, the founder of Black Liberation theology, would see the American prison system as an extension of America's historically oppressive and racist institutions that should not stand in the face of God's justice. Indeed God's justice would not call for Anakainosis-Desmios but rather the anakainosis of American culture that would lead to a dismantling of the penal system altogether. I not only acknowledge, but I also agree that on the surface, Anakainosis-Desmios could seem like a concept easily used to justify those prison ministries who avoid confronting the ills of American prison culture.

In the next chapter of this research, I will discuss how Anakainosis-Desmios could be seen as a phenomenon that occurs uniquely within a prison Bible study like LBS and how it can be used as an intervention that could improve the effectiveness of LBS. The Pastoral Praxeology method requires the proposal of an intervention that could improve the effectiveness of the religious practice that is being studied. In Chapter 7 I will discuss how Anakainosis-Desmios is a dynamic effect of the Logos Bible Study that arguably does not justify the incarcerated environment but rather is a counterforce to the hostility of prison culture. If this arguably unintentional effect of LBS could be properly discerned and intentionally pursued, the Logos Bible Study could become a religious practice that empowers practitioners to create pockets of resistance to the prison culture of Garden State Youth Correctional Facility and to encourage churches in free society to work toward the transformation of those social and political forces that maintain the American system of mass incarceration.

7. Improving the effectiveness of the Logos Bible Study:

Anakainosis-Desmios as tool for Improving the ministry

*« Les situations-choc entraînant des moments de réflexivité obligent souvent les individus à revoir leurs croyances. Elles les soumettent à une angoisse existentielle que l'adhésion à des croyances et des pratiques, et le recours à des liens affectifs permettent de réduire. Certaines expériences semblent donc plus propices que d'autres à encourager le recours à un système de sens. »*⁴⁸⁵

The above quote is by Rachel Sarg, a social scientist at the Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur l'Intervention Sociale (CERIS) des Laboratoires Dynamiques Européennes at the Université de Strasbourg. The above quote summarizes her view that, by entering prison life the detainee experiences shocking situations that bring about moments of self-reflection that include revisions of one's beliefs. She did a qualitative study of prisoners, chaplains and other prison staff at three different types of prisons in Strasbourg. Sarg wanted to study how these different people see the role of religion in prison and to define the complex relationships that detainees form with religious beliefs and practices in prison.⁴⁸⁶ Even though some would see her research limited by the number of detainees (30) and prison staff (30) interviewed, and by the types of prisons she considered (a prison, a detention center and a holding facility), she does an important study of the factors that could lead to religious radicalism by applying the work of sociologist Gerald Bronner on cognition and beliefs.⁴⁸⁷ The acceptance of certain beliefs, religious practices and personal relationships help alleviate the existential anxieties

⁴⁸⁵ Rachel Sarg, *La foi malgré tout: Croire en prison*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2016), 253.

⁴⁸⁶ <https://journals.openedition.org/lectures/20368>.

⁴⁸⁷ See Gerald Bronner, *L'empire des croyances*, (Paris, PUF, coll. « Sociologie », 2003).

that are brought on by the shocking situations of prison life according to Sarg. In the following section, I will offer that Rachel Sarg joins James Loder, Lennie Spitale, Jericho Ministries and the interviewed participants of the Logos Bible Study in revealing the concept of Anakainosis-Desmios. This will lead to the conclusion of this dissertation with a discussion about the next steps for the Logos Bible Study to become a more effective prison ministry.

7.1. Prison as a unique environment for spiritual renewal

The resident of a prison brings particular perspectives and experiences to a Bible study. These perspectives and experiences come from the captive's life before and during incarceration. As I have already acknowledged, the participants in the Logos Bible Study were able to overcome the many aspects of the prison environment that discourage committed religious practice. They were also able to overcome personal attitudes rooted in their past negative life experiences and open themselves to personal and communal dialogue with the Bible. Even though they have lived through violent situations before incarceration and through coercive and dehumanizing situations during incarceration and even though they were in a place where having selfish, depressed, apathetic, bullying and violent attitudes can be accepted as normal, all of the respondents to the interviews were able to trust themselves to create and develop over time new habits of self-reflection and of being an encouraging presence in the hostile prison environment.⁴⁸⁸ How were they motivated to do this while incarcerated?

⁴⁸⁸ See Table 1: #4b

Rachel Sarg offers that prison is a place where people recognize unique opportunities to adopt and practice a faith tradition. She offers that once a person enters the prison environment there are feelings of estrangement, fear, frustration and overall oppression, which the detainee naturally seeks to alleviate. The respondents to her research revealed that the captive can find some alleviation of the shock and weight of prison life by taking opportunities to define one's religious beliefs, to contemplate one's prison sentence, to envision one's destiny and to imagine one's time of incarceration as a test of one's faith. Sarg offers that, for detainees who have been rejected by society, religious belief and practice within an incarcerated environment offer a new identity, social circle and refuge. She further states that the prison milieu can make a person more cognitively aware of opportunities for religious practice. For Sarg, tragic situations like prison life can spark an acute mental investment in religious belief and practice.⁴⁸⁹ For Sarg an important part of human development is the growth of one's awareness of the passage of one's life. As time marches on people can have moments where they begin to wonder about the deeper meaning of their lives. However, since such thoughts come with acknowledgement of one's own mortality, many people avoid contemplating the meaning of their existence—it takes significant psychic investment that many people are not ready to offer due to more immediate concerns or more enjoyable distractions. The trauma of incarceration interrupts a person's mental routines that can take him through many days without critical reflection on his life and thereby gives the detainee the psychic motivation he needs to make “cognitively costly” investments in questions like “for

⁴⁸⁹ Sarg, 227-230.

what purpose do I live?”⁴⁹⁰ Sarg sees prison is a place where a person can find an exceptional opportunities to adopt or re-adopt religious beliefs and practices because of the shocking and even traumatic temporal and spatial factors at work in the prison facility that affect a person’s state of mind.

Rachel Sarg sees prison life as an experience that interrupts a person’s mental routines in a way that motivates him to shift his mindset toward considerations of life purpose, which is a perspective that Loder would interpret as evidence of a person going through the human developmental phases of “conflict” and “interlude for scanning” that I discussed in Chapter 5. For Loder a conflict within or disruption of one’s assumptions can lead a person to develop and test new perceptions of the disruptive situation and this process is a normal part of one’s development toward what Jack Mezirow would call a transformation of meaning schemes. Even though such psychological growth can happen normally throughout one’s life, Sarg brings attention to the tendency people have of avoiding growth in certain areas when they avoid contemplating certain subjects like life purpose and meaning. Sarg proposes that a person can go through life developing and maintaining certain mental routines that navigate daily life while avoiding the creation of other mental routines that negotiate the meaning of life. She posits that engaging in such critical reflection can be uncomfortable and stressful or in other words psychically costly.⁴⁹¹ However the oppressive conditions of prison life can give a person acute motivation to consider his life direction and use religion as a tool that can

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 228-229.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 228.

help a person to discern the meaning of his life. In conversation with Sarg, Loder might also see prison as a space where there are unique opportunities for the development of the self.

During his interview, John arguably demonstrated Sarg's dynamic of prison being a unique space that motivates people to engage questions that are routinely avoided in civil society.

JOURNALIST	Ok. And why are you taking this [Logos Bible Study] class?
JOHN	Why am I taking this class? [In order] to get closer to God. It's a program that I feel that I need to be in, to help me build up spiritually.
JOURNALIST	You don't need to be in it right? You can choose to be in it or not.
JOHN	Yeah. I chose to be in this program.
JOURNALIST	And...I was at one class now. Are the discussions always like this...or...?
JOHN	Well this is only my second class ...but, basically it's different topics on the scriptures and we will break off into little groups. The subjects we talk about may get off topic but it's always about something surrounding God.
JOURNALIST	And why is that important?
JOHN	God is important. It helps you... I can't quite explain why it's important but it's an important thing.
JOURNALIST	Ok. And do you discuss this afterwards with people as well or just there [in the class]?
JOHN	Yes. I always discuss with the person you just interviewed before me [Anthony]...yeah, if I have little questions, I'll come to him. I grew close to him since I've been in here. And like I said I'm not a people person so I don't really talk to people like that. He's somebody I can relate to. ⁴⁹²

At this point in the interview, the journalist addresses a topic with John that he is obviously not completely comfortable with and yet he continues to wrestle with it and informs her that he wrestles with it in discussions outside of the Bible study with other practitioners

⁴⁹² John, Worldvision interview, quotes #49-58.

like Anthony. Even Anthony stated that prior to prison he had not considered such questions about life and God.

JOURNALIST	Did you have similar discussions [in your hometown]?
ANTHONY	Uh...This?...Nah, this is really all new to me! ⁴⁹³

Sarg would offer that John and Anthony probably did not deeply contemplate concepts of God or of God's will for their lives while they were in free society however, in prison they experienced a disruption in their mental routines for daily living that made them decide to mentally invest in developing theological perspectives on their lives. For Sarg the prison schedule and structure can shock a person into reorienting their mental routines toward larger questions about meaning and purpose. She has a list of mentally disruptive elements of prison, which seem to correspond to the important areas (listed in Chapter 6 of this research) that an effective Bible study seeks to transform. Table 4 below lists the factors that Sarg posits can disrupt a person's thinking and make him more prone to seek religion and how those factors could be categorized according to those perspectives that effective prison ministry seeks to transform—perspectives on time, space, matter and people. Sarg offers a sociological argument for the adoption, practice and even radicalization of religious beliefs in prison and posits that the trauma of entering prison life disrupts the patterns of thinking that a person has developed in order to make sense of the world and to navigate it daily. I will unpack those disruptive factors offered by Sarg according to the four perspectives that effective prison ministries seek to transform through religious practices (from Chapter 6 of this research). This will lead to a theological interpretation of Sarg's work and ultimately help to clarify the concept of Anakainosis-Desmios.

⁴⁹³ Anthony, Worldvision Interview, Quote #25 and #26.

Table 4. Primary factors for the adoption of religious beliefs and practices in prison according to Sarg

Those perspectives that effective prison ministry seeks to transform	Sarg's primary factors for the adoption of religious beliefs and practices in prison
Temporal	The first days of incarceration The wait for judgment of one's case The inmate's release date The imposition of the prison routine
Spatial	Separation from loved ones Response to the institution Transmission of the faith
Material	Material needs Viewpoints on one's court case
Interpersonal	Social hierarchy in prison External events involving loved ones

According to Sarg, the inmate's temporal perspectives are disrupted in several ways after entering prison. During the first days of incarceration the detainee faces emotional distress that can distort a person's perception of time. For those detainees who are still awaiting trial or response to an appeal, time is filled with anxiety, since the detainee worries about whether there can be some legal escape from incarcerated life. Further along the spectrum is the person who has been judged and must find a way to pass the time in prison while waiting for his release date. One final and very important disruptor of a detainee's perception of time is the imposition of the prison timetables. Sarg acknowledges that as a person arrives in the prison he or she is faced with many rules and regulations designed to control and monitor how all inmates use their time and move their bodies.⁴⁹⁴ Sarg describes how inmates are stressed as they try to follow a timetable with which they are unfamiliar but that unfamiliarity does not afford any grace as people are punished for stepping outside of the

⁴⁹⁴ Sarg, 110.

timetables for any reason.⁴⁹⁵ While the prison schedules for movement, meals, programs and recreation seem to logically satisfy the prison administration's concerns about security, for the incarcerated person living under such time constraints there can be much confusion.⁴⁹⁶

In my experience, I have seen how the temporal confusion occurs due to competing or conflicting layers of timetables imposed upon the incarcerated. My duties as chaplain have included participating in an orientation program for new inmates who arrive at the facility where I am assigned. During this program, representatives of each department (Religious Services, Educational Services, Social Services, etc.) give the new residents information about how to navigate certain policies and procedures in order to secure the services they want while incarcerated at this particular prison. I remember one time in the small orientation room meant to accommodate between 10 and 30 people at a time, a young man had asked me about adding his name to the list of those who were about to practice the Muslim Holy Month of Ramadan. The resident was disappointed to know that while he could certainly practice his Muslim faith through prayer services and educational classes, he could not get his name on the Ramadan list. This was because the timeframe for registering for Ramadan had passed by the time of his orientation. This particular prison had to develop a policy for registering people for Ramadan for several administrative reasons. First, the Food Services Department needed to know an exact number of the participants by a certain date in order to prepare the nightly distributions of food in an efficient manner. Ramadan is a religious practice that calls for fasting from sunrise to sunset and then breaking the daily fast with prayer and one or more

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 110-115

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

meals during the night. In a prison setting where the dinner meal is a set time for all residents, and does not depend on the rising or setting of the sun, special accommodations have to be made for the Ramadan participants to receive their evening meal at a special time and with special contents—for example, a dinner meal and a breakfast meal for those who wish to eat before sunrise. Due to the large number of residents participating and their limited staff, the Food Services Department requested a deadline for people to register for Ramadan and if someone came to the facility after that deadline and could not prove that they were registered for Ramadan at a prior facility, then they could not be on the Ramadan list. Also, the Custody Department welcomed this policy because it also discouraged those residents who would try to register for Ramadan after the start of the Holy Month only to get extra food or in other words, to receive the evening Ramadan provision of food in addition to their regular meals. Custody has been concerned about certain residents enjoying extra food or using the extra food as currency for exchanges of goods and services with other inmates at the prison.

In this example of the resident being unable to officially register for Ramadan activity in prison, he was faced with timetables that reflected the concerns of several administrative departments. According to Religious Services, one is able to join in Ramadan at any time however the practical realities of prison, impose certain time constraints. The Prison Transport Services of New Jersey that brought the resident seeking to participate in Ramadan to the prison were following their own time schedule, which was oblivious to the timetables of any religious festivals or practices. The department of Food Services needed to create its own timetable in order to organize its limited resources to efficiently serve the hundreds of residents who sought to participate in Ramadan. The department of Custodial Services needed to influence the timeframe for registering for Ramadan in order to discourage those residents

who would abuse the Ramadan food privileges. All of these invisible forces at work confused the new resident who was simply trying to follow the religious timetable for Ramadan that he knew.

The challenges that the detainees face while fighting to understand the multi-layered timetables that govern their incarcerated lives can be worsened by any trauma or unresolved conflicts that they may bring with them to prison. Loder mentions how unresolved conflict can lead to negative emotions that can distort one's view of time.⁴⁹⁷ As I have previously noted, Jericho Ministries also acknowledged how those residents facing many years in prison can have negative emotions that make time seem closed with little opportunities for hope.⁴⁹⁸ By creating the Logos Bible Study, Jericho intended to offer a space where the practitioners could develop a relationship between their personal time and Kairos time or spiritual time—time that stands outside or above objective or societal time. With a transformed perspective, the LBS participant does not see time only as an instrument of punishment during incarceration or as a source of confusion but rather as a source of continuous opportunities to reveal the comforting message of the Gospel.

According to Sarg, the inmate's spatial perspectives are disrupted in several ways after entering prison where he loses all of his landmarks and reference points. The resident must deal with the thick stone walls and metals bars that inhibit his movement within the facility and prevent him from going to be with his loved ones.⁴⁹⁹ Whereas previously his mental routines included the expectation of having easy access to his loved ones while at home, now

⁴⁹⁷ Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit*, 210-212.

⁴⁹⁸ Board of Trustees of Jericho Ministries, *Jericho Ministries Fundraising Booklet*, 7.

⁴⁹⁹ Sarg, 110.

in prison, those expectations are interrupted and changed as the detainee must now submit to controls that only allow him to be near his loved ones on certain days of the week during certain hours in certain areas that may or may not be convenient to them. The detainee can no longer contact his family at will by phone or by Internet. Every form of communication happens at a certain area at a certain time through certain controlled devices. Consequently, the security controls of incarcerated space can delay the transmission of important news to or from the outside for days or weeks. In prison, space has become an instrument of control that leads to certain reactions from the resident. He can respond to the space with confusion and fear—which is what Sarg believes is the starting point for all people who arrive in prison for the first time—or eventually with compliance or defiance.⁵⁰⁰ The detainee can go along with the rules of the space or seek ways to use or manipulate or disrupt the space to his advantage through adversarial or amicable relationships and exchanges. Sarg acknowledges that amicable exchanges happen in religious circles among the incarcerated. The dedication of space to religious practices thereby offers significant opportunity in prison for the transmission of faith.⁵⁰¹ Through the Logos Bible Study, Jericho showed the influence of Loder by working to create a space where participants would see the potential to transform any space into an area for worship and religious instruction. With a transformed perspective, the LBS participant does not see space only as an instrument of control but also as an opportunity for the transmission of faith, which Sarg has acknowledged, and for spiritual encouragement.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 215-226.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 212-214.

According to Sarg, the inmate's material perspectives are disrupted in several ways after entering prison. Whereas on the street a person may have developed certain mental routines for obtaining needed materials, in prison those routines are no longer helpful as a person must create new relationships and new processes for obtaining needed items.⁵⁰² The resident realizes that one strong dynamic at work in prison culture is deprivation. Everyone lacks something and must find creative ways of obtaining it. Sarg notes that the chapel areas of prisons can be areas where goods are more easily obtained or exchanged by inmates. Detainees can use the chapel in order to gain a material advantage—especially since many chaplains feel called to respond in some way to the material needs of the incarcerated.⁵⁰³ Sarg's research also brings attention to how contentious the relationship can be between the prison resident and his case throughout his term of incarceration and I will show how one result of this contentious relationship is the high value that detainees ascribe to printed materials.

Everyday in prison the detainee must face the fact that a crime and a judgment have brought him there and everyday he must decide if the value of his life is measured by that judgment. Does the crime define him as a person? Will his criminal conviction be the primary force that defines the limitations and possibilities of his life for the rest of his time in prison and on Earth? My experience confirms that such questions trouble the minds of many incarcerated people. Many people keep their cases secret—especially if they involve violent or sexual crimes against women and children, which are judged as intolerable among the

⁵⁰² Ibid., 110-112.

⁵⁰³ Sarg, 175-179, also Erzen, 13-14.

incarcerated community and attract aggression from others.⁵⁰⁴ Sarg posits that religious beliefs and practices can help the detainee to separate his identity from his criminal conviction and to find hope and confidence in moving on with his life.⁵⁰⁵ This confidence can come from several perspectives on the self that religions can plant and nurture according to Sarg. One perspective is that the person is forgiven by God and therefore can move on with life—a predominantly Christian perspective. Another perspective is that God understands the person’s struggles that led him to incarceration and as long as he has not committed certain criminal acts, God can still use him as an instrument to correct oppressive and prejudicial systems—a predominantly Muslim perspective.⁵⁰⁶ As the inmate tries to use religion or some other means, to reshape his identity in a way that his criminal record does not continue to influence his progression in life, printed documents gain importance—from the Holy Scriptures to the detainees criminal records.

I described in Chapter 4 how Christian detainees could ascribe value to the Scriptures as a source of narratives that they can use to re-imagine their lives and it is a dynamic that Sarg would say is possible in other faith traditions. The Bible, Quran, Torah and other holy books can offer the inmate opportunities to create alternative narratives to his life that can reinterpret, criticize or replace the narrative presented by his criminal record. Jericho Ministries certainly taught that regardless of one’s crime, God could forgive the detainee and designed LBS to instruct people about how they could find biblical narratives that could inspire them to imagine ways to change and advance their lives, despite criminal conviction

⁵⁰⁴ Sarg, 160-164, also Spitale, 99-101

⁵⁰⁵ Sarg, 163

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 242.

and incarceration. Rachel Sarg recognized that the documented criminal record of the detainee could hinder his life but religious beliefs and practices can help the person to separate their identities from their crimes in ways that help them navigate life during and after prison more confidently. I would add that this dynamic enhances the importance of materials like printed documents—in particular criminal records and Holy Scriptures. In the context of Garden State Youth Correctional Facility, those LBS participants with transformed perspectives on matter did not see their criminal records only as something that could control one's life. Criminal records were also seen as documents that need to be analyzed, handled discretely and even reinterpreted through the alternative narratives offered by Scriptures which can also have power to control and direct life.

According to Sarg, the inmate's interpersonal perspectives are disrupted in several ways after entering the penitentiary. In her research she notes that from almost day one the new resident is faced with the social hierarchy at work within the prison. Her work echoes the observations of Gresham Sykes who wrote in the 1950s about captives forming social groups according to race, neighborhood or common social interests.⁵⁰⁷ Sarg's research confirms that this dynamic of association continues in the 21st century, not only in America where gang affiliations are strong,⁵⁰⁸ but also in Europe where associations can occur along the lines of

⁵⁰⁷ Gresham Sykes, *The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum Security Prison* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 94-108.

⁵⁰⁸ "Criminal street gangs have long been recognized as a threat...to the society at large...and to safety, security and integrity of the prison system...New Jersey's Department of Corrections has taken steps aimed at managing and containing that threat...Despite these...efforts, however, the impact of the gang threat on DOC's turf has worsened over time." State of New Jersey. NJ Commission of Investigation. *Gangland Behind Bars: How and*

age, ethnic groups, hometown or country and religion.⁵⁰⁹ Such interpersonal associations help the inmate to cope with and navigate prison culture with some level of social power and security. Other relationships whose importance is amplified during incarceration are those with loved ones outside of prison. Sarg notes that during incarceration the detainee can become very sensitive to those important events that involve loved ones. While incarcerated a person can worry about a loved one who is facing illness, stress or death without any personal comfort that the detainee could offer if physically present.⁵¹⁰ Sarg offers that an incarcerated person can turn to religion to find ways of acting in the world and touching the lives of loved ones.⁵¹¹ Sarg's analysis focuses on inmates who see their relationships inside and outside of prison as important instruments for coping with incarceration. She states as much in her book *La Foi Malgré Tout: Croire en Prison*:

« La religion est d'abord dans le contexte carcéral un mode d'emploi...On l'aura compris, un tel mode d'emploi, parfois synonyme de survie ou de nouveau départ, peut devenir problématique lorsqu'il sert des intérêts politiques islamistes ou lorsqu'il sert à se dédouaner de la responsabilité des actes commis, comme on l'a vu dans la fréquentation du christianisme. »⁵¹²

Sarg sees religion as an instrument for coping with prison that could become problematic if used by Islamic extremists or by perpetrators of heinous crimes seeking absolution of their responsibility through Christianity.

Why Organized Criminal Street Gangs Thrive in New Jersey's Prisons...And What Can Be Done About It. New Jersey: SCI, 2009, 1.

⁵⁰⁹ Sarg, 160, 161

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 233.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 179-181.

⁵¹² Ibid., 254.

As I have discussed in Chapter 6, Jericho Ministries believed that the Logos Bible Study practitioner with a transformed perspective, does not see people only as his or her instruments for coping with prison but also as instruments of God that could help the practitioner develop wisdom and behaviors that bring a person in accordance with God's will and against the dehumanizing culture of prison. Scholars like Tanya Erzen would see many prison ministries with intentions similar to Jericho assuming that prison is a good environment for religion to flourish—even if it was being used as an instrument of comfort by residents. In her view many faith-based ministries believe that prisons are necessary for religious awakening to occur because prisons are where punishment is just and necessary to encounter God and oneself. Erzen offers that instead of focusing on individual transformation through relationships with God, Christian ministries in prison need to address our collective responsibility in order to create and support a just society.⁵¹³ However, contrary to simple individual conversion, it was the hope of Jericho that its LBS practitioners would develop interpersonal perspectives that fostered compassion and care for others. On the interpersonal level of prison life, Jericho would say that Sarg describes detainees who may indeed practice religion and benefit from relationships that help the individual to handle prison life, however these detainees have yet to experience a transformed consciousness that reorients relationships toward a better life on spiritual as well as emotional levels.

In summary, Sarg posits that the temporal, spatial, material and interpersonal trauma of entering prison life can make detainees psychologically predisposed to explore, reclaim, adopt,

⁵¹³ Tanya Erzen, *God in Captivity: The Rise of Faith-Based Prison Ministries in the Age of Mass Incarceration*, 178-180.

or radicalize a faith tradition.⁵¹⁴ Sarg's research has been used primarily in Europe to investigate the phenomenon of religious extremism in prisons. One of the primary goals of her work was to see what are the reasons for which people consider religion while incarcerated. Once she discerned those reasons, she was able to construct an argument for why religious extremism can occur among the incarcerated. She posits that tragic situations disrupt peoples' mental routines and can make them open to religious dialogue. Prison is a tragic situation that can cause people to seek deeper meaning for their lives and a more profound understanding of their suffering and mistakes. All of the chaplain authors referenced or reviewed in this research acknowledge that prison life holds traumatic experiences for the incarcerated. As noted back in Chapter 5, there is a spectrum of behavioral reactions to prison trauma that occur, all of which are determined by the person's state of mind prior to and as a result of incarceration,⁵¹⁵ and there is a growing body of research regarding trauma, stress and the incarcerated,⁵¹⁶ however much of this research is not concerned with discerning the phenomenon theologically. Loder is a theologian and developmental theorist who would put traumatic prison situations into the area of conflict that offers a person an opportunity for psychological development as his or her assumptions are faced with destruction or modification. By being influenced by Loder, Jericho's Logos Bible Study sought to embrace

⁵¹⁴ Sarg, 195-198.

⁵¹⁵ Peter Ayton, Mandeep Dhami, George Loewenstein. "Adaptation to Imprisonment: indigenous or imported?" *Criminal Justice and Behavior*.

⁵¹⁶ Tina Maschi, Lindsay Koskinen, Deborah Viola, "Trauma, Stress, and Coping Among Older Adults in Prison: Towards a Human Rights and Intergenerational Family Justice Action Agenda," *American Psychological Association* 1085-9373/15 (2015), 2.

the trauma of prison life and was well positioned to be the place sought by many detainees—a refuge or a space for finding meaning or a terrain of transformation. For Sarg and for Jericho, prison opens people to religion in ways similar to but nevertheless distinct from traumatic situations in civil society. Even though Sarg would say that this openness to religions in prison is for utilitarian reasons and Jericho would say it was for spiritual reasons, both would agree that the hostile prison environment unlocks interest in contemplating religious beliefs and practices in a unique way.

7.2. Anakainosis in the Penitentiary

By pairing the concept of anakainosis or spiritual renewal of one's consciousness (discussed in Chapter 4) with the understanding that the traumatic experience of incarceration can predispose people to seek religion for spiritual renewal in way that is different from traumatic experiences elsewhere, one can understand the idea of Anakainosis-Desmios: a form of spiritual renewal that is only possible in the prison environment. "Jail could be a blessing and it could be a place of torture." Alex, one of the detainees interviewed for this research, made this statement.⁵¹⁷ He, along with the other practitioners of LBS demonstrated that their minds became instruments of Anakainosis-Desmios through their participation in the work of the Chaplain and Christian volunteers to make the Logos Bible Study a practice that created a terrain of spiritual transformation within a harsh territory of incarceration. Within this terrain the respondents believed that they gained a spiritual strength in their environment by adopting attitudes and behaviors that gave them no apparent physical advantage over the prison culture from the perspective of those who participate in the scrutiny and surveillance of

⁵¹⁷ Alex. Interview, quote #125.

the institution. They accepted and shared attitudes of humble service and compassion for others, even though these attitudes do not give any legal benefits regarding their sentences or any environmental benefit of freeing them from the oppressive surveillance and scrutiny of the culture. Anakainosis-Desmios occurs when learning perspectives have been transformed. By revisiting what the interviewees valued most in LBS, I will demonstrate how they expressed Anakainosis-Desmios through their participation in the Logos Bible Study.

In Chapter 3 I noted that the respondents offered the highest number of remarks in the areas of actively seeking God, self-reflection, transformation of perspectives under the inspiration of the Scriptures, seeking Christian fellowship, and developing a hopeful presence in the prison environment (Table 1: 1, 2a, 2c, 2d, 3a, 4b). The prison's environment of surveillance and scrutiny can lead people to have attitudes that oppose those of the interviewees. This research has up to this point demonstrated that the dramatic context of prison Bible study can lead people who are trying to survive the hostile prison environment to behave in the following ways: to actively seek ways to gain power in their environment; to change their perspectives under the examples of those who seem to have mastered the environment; to seek groups that strengthen or hide a prisoner's vulnerabilities; and to develop a threatening presence among prisoners along with a compliant but simultaneously opportunist presence among prison staff. The perspective of spiritual renewal in prison empowers a person to take care of his body and to use intellect, will and emotions to put the whole person in relationship with people, places and things that enable the practice of hospitality in a hostile environment. "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:1-2) Here the Apostle Paul talks about a mind

that has been renewed by the Holy Spirit and that can keep a person from conforming to his surrounding hostile environment. This is an effect of Anakainosis-Desmios—a result of the renewal of a person’s meaning perspectives.

Anakainosis-Desmios is a transformed state of consciousness that would be interpreted by Christians as a person who expresses spiritual renewal while in prison by finding and accepting those Holy Scriptures that teach him that the Holy Spirit can empower people to overcome negative social forces and structures that seem constant and overwhelming. Anakainosis-Desmios would emphasize scriptures like 2 Corinthians 4:7-9:

*“... We have this treasure in earthen vessels,
that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.
We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed;
We are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken;
Struck down, but not destroyed.”*⁵¹⁸

Spiritual renewal in prison empowers a person to lead a life that is alien to the penitentiary— a life where, even though he is stripped of all he possesses, he is a good steward of all he controls—starting with himself—for the love of God. Even though he is coerced, he is in control. Even though he is attacked, he serves. Even though he is constantly scrutinized, he finds ways to turn the scrutiny into opportunity for testimony, as we saw in particular during Alex’s interview:

“Jail is a place you don’t want to be... Like, it’s totally just, chaos. I mean like, especially how the COs (Correction Officers) treat you. If you don’t like people telling you what to do, don’t come to jail ... But ... I think that God has appointed [for] here

⁵¹⁸ See exegesis of this text in Chapter 4.

*certain people. For His chosen, instead of dying He has given us a second chance to let us realize [how much grace we have] ... Like now, sometimes the water comes out [of faucets] brown and there certain rules we have to follow like for example if one person gets into a fight, everybody [all other inmates] gets locked down (locked in their cells) even during a heat wave. You don't want to come to jail. [In the face of all of that] I thank God that He has given me the peace of mind and the perseverance and his grace for me [while] in this jail because without it I would have gone crazy.”*⁵¹⁹

Even though Alex is under constant surveillance, he is able to use it to strengthen his abilities to shine the light of God at all times. Despite the fact that the culture of prison seeks to punish and weaken him every day, the Word of God continues to empower him. Even though he is homeless, he does not walk in confusion because he imagines himself in communication with his heavenly home. He would see himself in Scriptures like 2 Corinthians 4:7-9, as a sojourner in a foreign land who represents a heavenly home by expressing heavenly attitudes.

It is important to note here that Jericho Ministries would say that it was not the Bible alone that brought about this spiritual renewal in prison. Rather it was the Holy Spirit who worked through the Bible (among other materials), through time, through space, and through people who were dedicated to the regular practice of using Biblical testimonies in order to remind people of the reconciling and restorative work of God in Christ. This research supports that perspective by showing that the practitioners gained Anakainosis-Desmios from the practice of Bible study with Chaplaincy staff, volunteers and incarcerated Christians within a hostile environment. This research shows that the time, space, materials and people involved in a religious practice set the stage for what Loder would call the transforming

⁵¹⁹ Alex, Worldvision Interview, Quote #130.

moment. Andrew Walls and Paul Ricœur would acknowledge that the social context of LBS certainly influenced the way the Scriptures were translated during the Bible study. The way they were translated helped people to discover and reinforce Anakainosis-Desmios. Anakainosis-Desmios, or spiritual renewal in prison, is a transformed perspective on the self and on one's environment that enables the hospitable engagement of one's hostile environment for the announcement and transmission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This accomplishes what Loder calls one derivative of the reality of having "Christ in me" by the power of the Holy Spirit: "one can overcome the defensive, protective patterns of ego function, enabling forgiveness, returning good for evil, loving the enemy and in the face of persecution rejoicing."⁵²⁰ Loder posits that it is simply the Holy Spirit that serves as catalyst for such a transformation of the self while this research would posit (and Jericho would agree) that it is Bible study—arguably as an instrument of the Holy Spirit— within a prison environment that is the catalyst for this transformation of perspectives and behaviors.

Keeping in mind that it is the Bible study that empowers an incarcerated person to discern and dismiss those attitudes and behaviors that contribute to the hostile environment of the prison, I would propose that Anakainosis-Desmios can occur in a Bible study group that, like LBS, seeks to empower and encourage people to cognitively separate Christian attitudes and actions from those of the prison milieu. Bible study groups who are effective in this would fall into a model similar to that of an electrolytic cell. I would borrow this device from the field of electrochemistry because it is used to separate the components of a chemical solution.

⁵²⁰ Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit*, 73.

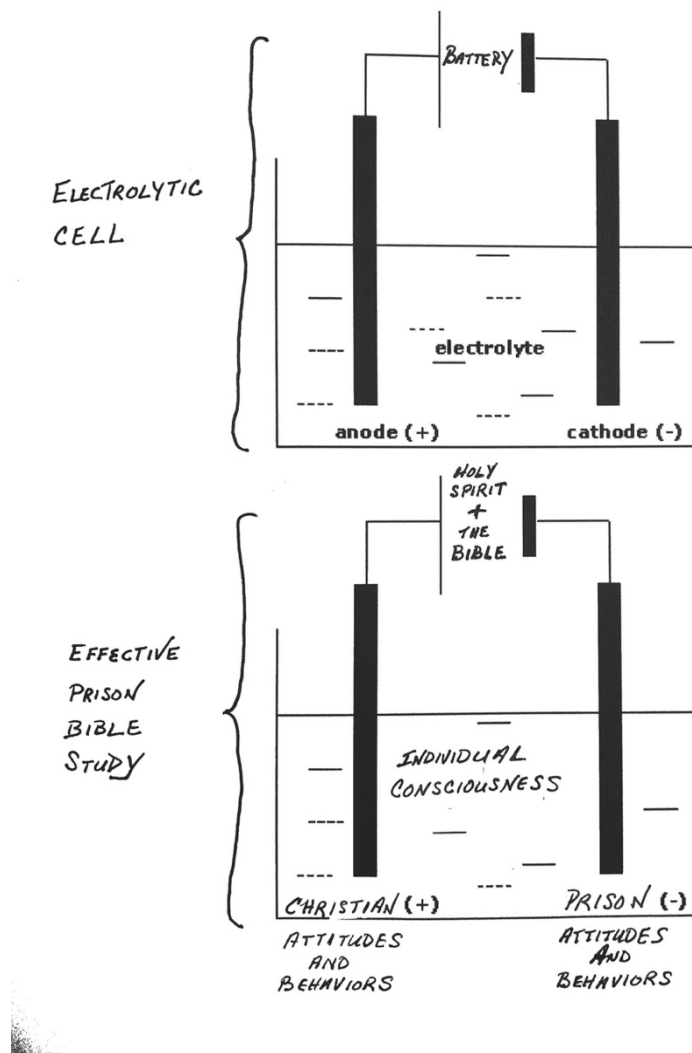


Figure 11. The electrolytic cell and the effective prison Bible study

Figure 11 demonstrates how Jericho Ministries would hope the Logos Bible Study perform its ministry. The Holy Spirit and the Bible empower the Bible study group to help the incarcerated practitioner to develop a renewed mind that can separate a prison-centered attitudes from a Christ-centered attitudes—a renewed mind that can discern those attitudes and behaviors that contribute to the incarcerated environment and those that contradict it.

Anakainosis-Desmios is a transformed state of mind in which Logos Bible Study practitioners express temporal, spatial, material and interpersonal perspectives that can create

a terrain of transformation within a territory of incarceration. As noted earlier, the participants in LBS discuss Scriptures that empower them to transform their perspectives on the time, space, materials and people that have been set aside and designed for punishment and correction into instruments for finding and sharing the love, power and guidance of God. Indeed, spiritual renewal in prison enables a person to see the “prison of visibility”⁵²¹ as a theater for spiritual testimony. Through Anakainosis-Desmios the prison resident is not only an object of observation by the prison administration, in addition he becomes an observer of himself and of the prison system using theological lenses to discern those visible and invisible powers of coercion and confusion that influence his life as well as methods of participating in God’s processes of transformation for himself and for others.

The emancipative attitudes and behaviors brought on by Anakainosis-Desmios can only occur within a prison. It can be a form of the openness to religion that Sarg describes as occurring in a unique way in prison. The testimonies of the LBS participants demonstrate that only while immersed in a culture of coercion and surveillance can a person discover and commit to display attitudes and behaviors that are counterintuitive to the incarcerated world. These emancipative attitudes and behaviors are delineated in the list of dynamics that mark an effective prison ministry (see Table 1). The “emancipation” achieved by imprisoned Christian Bible students of a renewed mind is not of the sort that leads to legal freedom from the prison experience, but rather it is a type of emancipation that leads a person to relationships that empower them to detach emotionally and spiritually from the hostilities of the prison environment in order to subscribe to hospitable attitudes and behaviors. These hospitable

⁵²¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200.

attitudes and behaviors lead the incarcerated practitioner to act as a transformed person who finds value in educational and/or encouraging activities and conversations with others.

As I have already noted, there are proponents of Liberation Theology who would argue that the purpose of spiritual liberation is to bring about socio-political liberation and the transformation of oppressive social structures and therefore, they would not consider any “Emancipative Penitentiary Theology” to be grounded in true liberation. They would be correct in their argument since a prison theology would presume incarceration or oppressive surveillance of some kind and focus on religious practice within that environment. A prison theology would not assume that effective religious practice was necessarily tied to a departure from or transformation of the prison culture. Nevertheless, those who are trapped within prison culture, need immediate emotional and spiritual help as well as long-term social and judicial help. Anakainosis-Desmios offers the incarcerated more than just methods for coping but also a means of creating a space for transformation in prison culture that strengthens the person and can possibly change the culture of the prison if a large enough community of people with renewed minds is formed.

Having transformed perspectives can cause a person to seek to discern and meditate on those Biblical scriptures that reveal God’s transformative love at work in people despite hostile environments of punishment and correction. The American prison system is maintained by a public that often seems unforgiving and blind to the attitudes and relationships that support hostilities within the prison milieu. Prison Bible studies that offer opportunities for incarcerated Christians to gain the perspective of Anakainosis-Desmios are practices that bring into relationship incarcerated Christians with Christians who come into prisons. The creation of hopeful relationships between captives who practice Bible study and

Christian volunteers is an important aspect of prison Bible study that establishes a community of faith and a faith-based terrain of transformation within the territory of incarceration—a theater of hope within the drama of prison.

7.3. Improving the future practice of the Logos Bible Study through increased awareness of Anakainosis-Desmios

By following the Pastoral Praxeology method of research, we have observed and theologically interpreted the Logos Bible Study with significant attention given to the challenges at work in the dramatic context of the practice and now the methodology calls for intervening and modifying the practice in a way that will help it to overcome its challenges and increase its future effectiveness. Jean Guy Nadeau, a pioneer in Pastoral Praxeology, describes “la Prospective,” or the future possibilities of a religious practice, in the following way:

*« La prospective analyse le présent, en fonction du futur, pour le modifier. Elle cherche aussi à déterminer les conditions de transformation du présent pour réaliser le futur souhaité. »*⁵²²

Nadeau puts forth the understanding that once a religious practice has been studied and its strengths and weaknesses within its milieu are revealed, it is reasonable to seek to help improve the future performance of the practice.⁵²³ Jericho Ministries sought to improve the Bible study practices that it offered to the incarcerated by expanding its vision beyond the evangelical perspective of Watchman Nee toward the theological perspective on human

⁵²² Jean Guy Nadeau, “La prospective en praxéologie pastorale.” *La praxéologie pastorale, orientations et parcours* 2 (1987), 260.

⁵²³ Ibid., 259-261.

development put forth by James Loder. The current practitioners of Jericho's Logos Bible Study still hope to improve the effectiveness of the practice for the prison environment and would agree with the application of Nadeau's point of view on "la Prospective."

*"[The Logos Bible Study] has prepared me [for return to society] by helping me to grow in all areas of my life. It has given me the tools to assess my strengths and weaknesses, come up with a plan, and put it into action. It has given me the confidence to know that I am an individual possessing gifts and creative capacity. It taught me healthy expression. It prepared me to engage with culture in an intentional thoughtful way so as to not fall to mindless conformity. Most of all, it prepared me by helping me realize: that I am not in this life alone; that God placed me (and everyone) here for a reason; and that, while we must absolutely focus on the necessity of an occupation, we must also find and develop our vocation [calling]. Logos has prepared me indeed."*⁵²⁴

This quote by a respondent to the follow up questionnaire for LBS practitioners sums up what my research seems to have demonstrated: the Logos Bible Study has been effective in its ministry to a certain extent but there is still opportunity for the practice to grow in effectiveness. In order to see where LBS could improve, I will look once again at the responses of those incarcerated people who were interviewed by World Vision. When reviewing the important dynamics for an effective prison Bible study, there were certain ones that were conspicuously lacking acknowledgement from the interviewees. Only one of the interviewees (Paul) put his life experience into direct conversation with Scripture (Table 1: #2b) by saying that his experience of LBS was like Proverbs 27:17 where "iron sharpens iron"— or where a person works to improve the life of his friend. Even though we can say

⁵²⁴ Respondent 1. *Appendix 4: Questionnaire for People who were interviewed about their participation in the Logos Bible Study while Incarcerated in 2007*. Response to Question 14.

that all of the respondents demonstrated that they gained empowering relationships during their religious practice, only one of them tried to acknowledge this life experience by using biblical illustrations. I also noted earlier that only one of the respondents (Alex) mentioned during his interview the dynamic of making connections to incarcerated and free world communities of the Christian faith through intentional conversations about God's works of redemption, reconciliation and regeneration within the general American culture of incarceration (Table 1: #3c). In two extensive commentaries that could be seen as evangelical testimonies, he states that God is calling all of us no matter where we are. He proclaims that, God "brings you to Him," even if you are kicking and screaming. Near the end of his interview, Alex tries to share what he has learned inside prison about the redemptive work of God with all those in the free world who may be caught in the whirlpool of selfish pursuits and of inefficient justice systems that can pull them into the prison industrial complex. He shares that God can bring us to God's light and grace no matter where we are.⁵²⁵ Even though his engagement of the redemptive work of God in society as a whole was inspiring, he was nevertheless, the only one to offer such insights during the interview about the program.

One final dynamic of an effective pastoral prison practice that received little recognition by the respondents was in regard to having a level of environmental awareness that leads to the intentional exploration of ways to use one's transformed perspectives to overcome the harsh environmental realities of the practice (Table 1: #5b). Two respondents (Alex and Paul) gave only one comment during their interviews about this dynamic. One (Alex) said that the Logos Bible Study was "a place for us to practice the faith," and, even

⁵²⁵ Alex. Interview, quote #133.

though prison is a place where many suffer, God’s grace can make it “a blessing” if people fight themselves and fight prison culture “to practice the faith.”⁵²⁶ The other respondent (Paul) stated that there are “brothers” who, through the practice, have lives that have overcome the punishment and violence that people may think are the only dynamics at work in a prison. He talked about how the practitioners were encouraged in the class to find ways to use their prison time to prepare themselves for a better life.⁵²⁷

The above highlighted topics that received the least attention from the respondents can be the points of intervention into the Logos Bible Study that could lead to a strategic plan for the future of the practice. These points of intervention are within the dynamics of (1) self-development—finding ways to put personal testimonies into conversation with biblical testimonies; (2) connections to the larger Christian community—making intentional conversations about God’s works of grace in America’s culture of incarceration; and (3) environmental engagement—exploring practical ways of transforming perspectives to overcome the harsh realities of prison (see Table 1: (2b), (3c) and (5b)). I will give a general overview of the modifications of the practice along with the suggested timing for each modification and then explain in more detail how each intervention could be accomplished by increasing the practitioners’ awareness of Anakainosis-Desmios.

The first intervention would emphasize giving the practitioners more opportunities to put their life stories in conversation with Biblical stories. The timing for this modification would be during the small group sessions where the students are expected to reflect on their

⁵²⁶ Alex. Interview, quote #132.

⁵²⁷ Paul. Interview, quote #135.

personal histories and share their life testimonies in relation to the subject of the day, they could also be invited to find certain scriptures that connect in some way to their personal testimonies.

The second intervention would emphasize giving the practitioners more opportunities to have intentional conversations about God's works of redemption, reconciliation and regeneration in America's culture of incarceration. The timing for this modification would be during the large group lecture. When the time comes to present an object from popular culture is used as a focal point for discussion of the subject of the day, the Chaplain or Christian volunteers who are facilitating the discussion that day can choose cultural objects that reflect America's culture of incarceration. As stated in the outline of the Logos Bible Study in the Appendix, the subjects include a wide range of things from newspapers, music videos, paintings, etc. After presenting an object that exhibits some political, social, economic or emotional aspect of the American culture of incarceration, the facilitators can then offer a Scripture or invite the participants to find one that reveals how churches in free society can address that highlighted aspect of the American prison system with God's work of spiritual renewal.

The third intervention would emphasize contemplating the environment of the practice and ways of overcoming the harsh realities of the practice (Table 1: #5a and 5b). During the gathering time before the opening prayer the participants would be invited to share any environmental challenges they had in trying to prepare for the session. Even though there were a significant number of comments made about this dynamic of this practice, they were made by only two of the respondents, Alex and John, and Alex made most of them. One way of enhancing the practitioners' ability to discern and overcome the environmental hindrances

to their practice within the prison, would be to offer time to share these challenges and during the opening prayer the group could lift up these challenges before God and encourage the participants to look for those Scriptures and/or conversations during the Bible study that could inspire ideas on how to overcome the obstacles of prison culture.

These three interventions would make the practice more pertinent in the lives of the participants by creating a stronger space for transformation in the prison. The facilitators could accomplish these modifications to the practice if they were made aware of the dynamic of spiritual renewal in prison (or Anakainosis-Desmios) that can be intentionally cultivated within the incarcerated participants in LBS.

As I stated in Chapter 2, Jericho Ministries was influenced by the liberatory teaching methods of Paulo Friere, while it was seeking to create a new model for prison ministry.⁵²⁸ Since the facilitators of the practice already understand a pedagogy that is sensitive to the perspectives of the oppressed, they would be open to learn about Anakainosis-Desmios and about those scriptures that inspire and strengthen this transformed state of being—scriptures that raise awareness of the hostile environments that the Christians have had to overcome in history in order to practice their faith. The leadership and volunteers of Jericho Ministries who participate in LBS are already sensitive to the hostile realities of prison and part of their mission is to bring hope to such an environment. Therefore, training about the transformed perspectives that come from spiritual renewal in prison would enhance their ministry by encouraging them to find those scriptures that offer models of Christian wisdom and

⁵²⁸ See Paulo Friere. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2000).

hospitality at work in hostile environments where the faithful are in varying states of homelessness, poverty, powerlessness, persecution, alienation and punishment.

« La prospective s'affirme donc comme un temps d'intégration, d'approfondissement et d'explicitation de ce qui habite déjà les autres moments praxéologiques et qui nous porte à agir dans un milieu, pour le servir, avec d'autres. »⁵²⁹

I shall propose the future possibilities for the Logos Bible Study in the manner described above by Nadeau. I shall integrate my research on the history of Jericho Ministries with my observations about the Logos Bible Study and with its implications in order to demonstrate how Jericho can obtain its hope for the Logos Bible Study: a religious practice that not only serves the hearts of the practitioners but also the surrounding culture of the practice.

7.3.1. Self-development: giving the practitioners more opportunities to put their life stories in conversation with Biblical stories

As I have stated, Jericho launched itself into prison ministry while holding as a priority the well being of the imprisoned. "...Christians need to know how to relate the Bible to their everyday problems."⁵³⁰ Jericho created the Logos Bible Study at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility with the intention of helping incarcerated practitioners to grow in their understanding of the Bible and in their ability to practically apply the Holy Scriptures to their everyday lives in prison. Therefore, if the volunteers were to learn about how the Holy Spirit can renew the minds of the incarcerated in a unique way, during every meeting of the Bible

⁵²⁹ Nadeau, 261.

⁵³⁰ See Figure 2, panel 6.

study they could encourage the incarcerated practitioners to seek and share those Scriptures that speak to their personal life experiences.

A good time to encourage this would be when the practitioners have moved into small groups for conversations that invite the expression of personal testimonies. Perhaps in order to prepare for such sharing in the small groups the facilitators and the other participants could be instructed to bring Scriptures to the session that speak to the main theological topic of the session (e.g., God's values versus human values, body, mind, soul or spirit, etc.).

7.3.2. Building community between the church outside and the church inside: giving the practitioners more opportunities to have intentional conversations about God's works of redemption, reconciliation and regeneration in America's culture of incarceration

As noted earlier, Jericho was concerned about building connections between the church inside of Garden State Youth Correctional Facility and the churches represented by its volunteers. In its annual appeal for local church support Jericho leadership stated to local churches "When you support us financially, or prayerfully, you walk with our teams behind those prison walls."⁵³¹ Jericho sought not only financial support but spiritual connection between inside and outside churches through prayers offered by outside churches for the incarcerated and by sharing testimonies about the prison ministry. Jericho could fortify this ministry goal by ensuring that the Logos Bible Study offers detainees opportunities to discuss the challenges of the American prison system and how God can use the outside church to

⁵³¹ See Appendix, Jericho Ministries, *Fundraising Booklet*, 3.

improve the system. Anakainosis-Desmios can offer some valuable insights about how the church in civil society can participate in God's works of redemption, reconciliation and regeneration that can engage and transform those collective social forces that create and maintain the oppressive practices of American prison culture.

The timeframe of the practice during which the expression of such insights would be most helpful is during the large group discussion of the Logos Bible Study when an object from popular culture is presented as an opportunity for practitioners to use their newly acquired theological lenses on body, mind, soul and spirit to analyze whatever aspect of popular culture is represented by the object. By placing this modification to LBS at this point during the practice, the representations of popular culture will be expanded beyond the visual and performing arts to those public policies and protests about mass incarceration that represent the part of American culture that directly affects the lives of prison residents. By sharing the insights born of Anakainosis-Desmios with outside churches, it would be possible to create partnerships that address the failings of the American prison system on various levels.

7.3.3. Contemplating the environment of the practice: ways of using transformed perspectives to overcome the harsh environmental realities of the Logos Bible Study

When Jericho decided to create a Christian education model for prison ministry and have the Logos Bible Study as the first fruit of that model, it demonstrated its decision to expand its evangelical vision for prison ministry to supplement its concern for personal salvation with an acknowledgment that an effective religious practice will help the practitioner to use his or her transformed perspectives to resist the harsh realities of prison instead of

contribute to them. “Inmates have their own peculiar set of everyday problems to deal with. We need to encourage them to live out their faith, as well as share it with others.”⁵³² While social researchers like Rachel Sarg take note of how religion can be a strategic tool of resistance,⁵³³ and while there are also theologians who would also argue that the church is not just a tool but also an evangelical call to resist oppressive social structures like the prison system,⁵³⁴ when the Logos Bible Study encourages the expression of *Anakainosis-Desmios*, the inside church becomes a force of transformation of prison culture. The residents do not see religion as simply an instrument of resistance to prison culture, rather they see themselves as evangelical instruments of resistance who succeed in living lives of spiritual enlightenment, confidence in self, compassion, hospitality and wisdom despite a harsh environment full of experiences of violence, dehumanization, fear and confusion.

There is an opportune time for inviting people to share the difficulties that the prison environment has imposed on detainees as they try to prepare for the Bible study or even as they try to live out what they have learned in the Bible study. This time frame would be before the start of the practice while the people are gathering. During this time when people are usually simply greeting each other and making small talk, the facilitator who is scheduled to lead the session can circulate in the room and ask the participants about any challenges they may have experienced prior to LBS and then during the opening group prayer the facilitator can lift up the challenges that the men have shared and/or invite the men to share those

⁵³² See Figure 2, panel 6.

⁵³³ Sarg, 215-217.

⁵³⁴ “We are still awaiting the church communities who will make “no more prisons, part of their proclamation and enactment of the gospel,” Mark Taylor, *The Executed God*, 143.

challenges, asking for God to give guidance for addressing those problems through the Bible study and throughout the week.

I have offered the proposed modifications in a way that makes clear the six primary facets of a religious practice⁵³⁵ that need to be observed in Pastoral Praxeology which, in the case of the Logos Bible Study, are: Garden State Youth Correctional Facility as the place of the practice (where); the responsibilities and relationships of the actors (who); the intentional expression of the detainee's transformed perspectives that result from Anakainosis-Desmios (what); by emphasizing self-development, fortifying Christian communities and contemplating the milieu of the practice (how); placement of modifications at certain times during the practice (when); and offering the modifications in order to attempt to make LBS more effective in its ministry (why). According the leadership of Jericho, these six basic elements of a religious practice were maintained over time in the prison because the practitioners have had transformed perspectives on time, space, matter and people in the prison chapel. The testimonies of those LBS practitioners suggest that the spiritual renewal experienced by the detainees led them to seek to apply their transformed perspectives not only in the prison chapel but also in all areas of the prison. In addition to their responses to the interview, a couple of responses to the questionnaire shown below seem to indicate a renewal of the mind that was not limited to expression in the prison chapel. Both of the respondents were still incarcerated when they responded to questionnaire:

⁵³⁵ "The who, where, what, how, when, and why of a practice." Nadeau, *Théologiques*, 88.

“I know that participating in the Logos Bible Study has influenced my attitudes and behaviors during my incarceration. It has done this because the foundational disciplines I learned then still apply now.” – Respondent #1

“Participating in the Logos Bible Study was very influential, not just towards my behavior and attitudes during my incarceration but for my future life afterwards.” – Respondent #2

Anakainosis-Desmios is a spiritual phenomenon that happens uniquely in prison and if the practitioners of the Logos Bible Study intentionally seek to give more opportunities for expression of the transformed perspectives of the incarcerated, LBS may increase its effectiveness, which was the hope of Jericho Prison Ministries.

7.4. The Logos Bible Study as a hopeful practice in prison

“I cannot be an optimist but I am a prisoner of hope.” — Cornel West

Jericho Ministries decided to be different from other prison ministries that believed that the focus of prison ministry should be on individual salvation because regardless of the state of the prison system, one can be optimistic about it if the Gospel is being preached and taught. Instead of being content with the work of its prison ministries, Jericho hoped to improve those ministries and consequently was willing to go beyond its normal list of evangelical authors and theologians. I have already shown that the Logos Bible Study was quite effective in its ministry so this leads to the question: What if the proposed alterations to the Logos Bible Study are not enacted? Would LBS continue to be considered effective? It could possibly continue to demonstrate effectiveness, however, it would also continue to be lacking in the important areas of personal development, building communal connections with outside churches and increasing methods of overcoming the challenges of prison to religious practice

and compassionate lifestyle. If the Logos Bible Study simply gave more opportunities during the practice to hear the insights and experiences of the incarcerated, Anakainosis-Desmios could have more opportunity to be received by others and to enable them to live lives of transformed consciousness in prison. At this point, after having offered certain interventions to a practice, I shall propose a future outlook on what the practice could become once it has been modified. To conclude this study of the Logos Bible Study, I will propose a modified and relevant practice along with short, medium and long term expectations of the ministry at Garden State Youth Correctional facility. In addition, I will state the implications of the modified practice for prison ministry in general.

As stated earlier, the Logos Bible Study would be modified in three ways that would make the practice more efficient in its creation of space for transformation in prison. All of the proposed interventions will lead to sustainable change by those facilitators who make the incarcerated students aware of the possibility that they could experience spiritual renewal that is unique to the prison environment. The facilitators can support this declaration by bringing to the small group portion of LBS Scriptures at the ready that enable practitioners to see God's works of transformation within hostile environments. These Scriptures can be used if no one else in the small group is offering a Scripture that people can put into conversation with their lives. This will raise the awareness of such scriptures for the Bible study participants and assure that the Bible study is a space for them to experience transformation of their meaning perspectives on their lives during their time in prison. Such a strategy would be supported by James Loder whose work inspired LBS and who wrote:

"Scripture, sacrament, worship and theological writings become extremely vital in establishing the meaning of transforming moments. [They help a person to recognize]

the larger context of what Christ has done, and continues to do, to bring his World into our 'worlds.'”⁵³⁶

In the short term of three to six months, Christian volunteers can receive an orientation to God’s transformative work of Anakainosis-Desmios and to the new strategies for LBS. The orientation would help the facilitators to find Scriptures that give examples of believers who find and even are transformed by the Holy Spirit into dynamic instruments Godly hospitality despite living in hostile situations, cultures and political systems that seem static. In the short term it is expected that the facilitators will need time to get accustomed to finding and using scriptures that encourage spiritual renewal in adverse conditions in addition to the scriptures that are already a part of the practice.

In the medium term of six to twelve months, the time allocations for different segments of the Logos Bible Study will be changed to allow for the proposed modifications to LBS. Also the facilitators will start to encourage people before the opening prayer to share the challenges they have had in prison in practicing their faith. The facilitators will start to lead large group conversations about opportunities for the church on the street to participate in God’s transformative works of redemption, reconciliation and regeneration in the American system of mass incarceration. They will partner with the Christian residents to generate ideas about how inside and outside Christian communities can address America’s culture of incarceration. The Christian volunteers will also become more sensitized to the prison environment and the unique way God enables the detainees to continue their practice despite the challenges they face.

⁵³⁶ Loder, 190.

In the long run, beyond 12 months, Jericho Ministries would imagine, and I would concur, that the modified Logos Bible Study would firmly establish a terrain for psychological and spiritual transformation within a territory of physical and psychological incarceration. I expect the creation of a space (regardless of the area assigned by the prison administration for the practice) where those who have been alienated from society for various social reasons can be like the people described by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10—people who, despite hostile environments, have been able to become hospitable witnesses to God’s works of reconciliation, restoration and love (see Chapter 4). Also, in the long run the incarcerated practitioners will be empowered to affect prison culture in some positive ways.

The concept of the Panopticon as presented by Bentham and studied by Foucault, states that people are put in enclosed spaces of surveillance and scrutiny for the safety of the individual and of society. However, incarceration can have many hurtful effects (some intentional, some not) on people who must overcome the negative realities of prison in order to create an effective prison ministry. Consequently, theologians like Mark Taylor could argue that as long as the system of criminal justice does not change, the penitentiaries that it produces cannot become effective places for positive transformation and empowerment. Taylor and other Liberation Theologians would not see chaplains who are historically a part of the oppressive American prison system, as dependable instruments of change. They and the volunteers they supervise can be seen as instruments of the coercive system of incarceration.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁷ Taylor, *The Executed God*, xi.

At this point I return to the anecdote at the beginning of Chapter 1 of this research about Allan. I would argue that the sadness he expressed about soon leaving the prison could be evidence that he had experienced *Anakainosis-Desmios*. And even though he may use his renewed mind to discover and create nourishing relationships with men and woman of all colors and nationalities outside of prison, he knows that they will not be like what he believes the Holy Spirit helped him experience while in prison. This experience with Allan makes me firmly believe that while God is working with people in civil society to change our attitudes and policies about incarceration, God is also working in special ways to free the minds and to comfort the hearts of those incarcerated people in the midst of their imprisonment.

I have no doubt that only the public can change the system of incarceration in America through enlightened discourse and cooperative strategies between the public and their agents of law making and law enforcement. I also know that this process takes time. During this time-consuming process, people with the potential for personal change in the prison can miss opportunities for change. A modified Logos Bible Study that seeks to be a space for spiritual renewal in prison can offer a model of best practices that can help prison ministries create effective spaces for transformation and become spiritual complements to the work being done on the outside to change the incarceration system. The Logos Bible Study with its strategies for becoming more effective, can be a model for ministries seeking to reveal God's transforming power to incarcerated, oppressed or displaced believers who are trapped in hostile environments.

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Appendices

Transcript of interview conducted by journalist for WorldVision Ministries in November 2007

PSEUDONYMS OF PARTICIPANTS:

ANTHONY

JOHN

ALEX

PAUL

INTERVIEWER: JOURNALIST

NAME	COMMENTS
JOURNALIST	1. So if you don't mind as the first thing, if you could just tell me again your names and the spellings of your names and all that stuff.
ANTHONY	2. ANTHONY
JOURNALIST	3. OK
JOHN	4. JOHN
JOURNALIST	5. OK
ALEX	6. ALEX
JOURNALIST	7. OK
PAUL	8. PAUL
JOURNALIST	9. OK. And, one thing I have to ask you of course: why you are here?
ANTHONY	10. For robbery and, uh, a felony murder case.
JOURNALIST	11. And how long did you say you have to stay here?
ANTHONY	12. I got 12 years to do—[12 years] left. My sentence was uh, 17 [years]. But I got time in already.
JOURNALIST	13. And do you do other things besides [the Logos Bible study in the chapel] that you did here tonight? Are there similar programs that you participate in, or...?
ANTHONY	14. Yeah they have uh...vocational trades you could take here. I'm in a computer programming trade. And, uh, I was attending college courses down here. Now I have to transfer to a different school but, you know. That's in the process and everything...

JOURNALIST	15. What? Why is that? I don't understand that. Why do you have to do that?
ANTHONY	16. [It is] something that had to do with the funding that the government gives [for college courses]. I guess it's a grant that they give to this place (the prison) to have college courses. It was called "Project Inside" through Mercer County Community College. And they cut the funding for inmates who had over five years left in their sentence. So I was taken out of enrollment for that, uh, specific college.
JOURNALIST	17. Ok. And when you go to a class like this for example [Logos Bible Study in the chapel], what's... what sort of... is it fun to be just with other people? Or what is it about it? What's interesting?
ANTHONY	18. Oh definitely. You know...uh... fellowshiping with my brethren. You know. And..uhh... just discussing the things of God. And...what interests me about this course is: it helps you apply the things that the Bible teaches in a practical way.
JOURNALIST	19. Give me an example of [how] that [happens]...
ANTHONY	20. OK. Uh...an example...Like, the passage that we were reading today: it was about having a healthy body because all of our bodies have a purpose, according to the Apostle Paul. So that means [we are] not to abuse our bodies because our bodies are meant for something. They are not just meant to run around doing whatever we want to do. You know what I mean? Our bodies are supposed to be dwelling places [of the Holy Spirit]. And then we explore other chambers of the body as well: the mind, the soul and the spirit—[in addition to] the body.
JOURNALIST	21. One thing I didn't ask you is where you are originally from.
ANTHONY	22. Bridgeton, New Jersey.
JOURNALIST	23. So that's, like, close to here or something?
ANTHONY	24. Not really. More South Jersey.
JOURNALIST	25. Did you have similar discussions there or is this sort of new?
ANTHONY	26. Uh..this...nah this is really all new to me! I am relatively young. You know what I mean (YKWIM)? I'm only 19 years old and I've been incarcerated for a few years. So, this is helping me mature. Seriously. [It's] helping me mature into, uh, a man, shall I say? [Which is] definitely an experience to go through. And uh, things like this—programs like this they help me in that experience [of becoming a man]...
JOURNALIST	27. In which way?
ANTHONY	28. Because I'm not going through it by myself. I have people I can relate to. You know what I mean? And we all are striving for the same goal. And that's to get closer to

	God.
JOURNALIST	29. {Turning to JOHN} I have to ask you too...Why you are here at the present.
JOHN	30. Kidnapping and unlawful possession of a weapon.
JOURNALIST	31. Here in Trenton or...?
JOHN	32. Camden.
JOURNALIST	33. So you are from Camden originally.
JOHN	34. Yes.
JOURNALIST	35. Ok. And tell me a little bit about how long you've been here, how much longer you have to stay here...that sort of thing...
JOHN	36. I've been down here for a little over three years now. And I plan on being here another three.
JOURNALIST	37. And what sort of things do you also take, like college courses or anything like that..or..?
JOHN	38. I have taken two vocational shops already—electric and building trades. I am currently in upholstery...
JOURNALIST	39. In what?
JOHN	40. In upholstery. And I'm uh taking the GED class, [getting ready for] the GED test as we speak.
JOURNALIST	41. And you think that's going to help—that's going to help you when you get out or...?
JOHN	42. Yes. Um...As far as ...well, all the trades and stuff that I'm doing...I'm just doing that so I can know how to do those things but all I wanna do is drive trucks because I never been anywhere. I wanna be a truck driver.
JOURNALIST	43. Really?
JOHN	44. Yes.
JOURNALIST	45. Do you have family [in that profession] or anybody or...?
JOHN	46. No. It's just that...people told me about it before I got locked up but I didn't listen to them.
JOURNALIST	47. But you wanted to become a truck driver.
JOHN	48. Yeah. It makes money. I don't have any children or anything like that so... I just wanna travel that's all. And then I'm not really a "people person" so that's something [where] I can be on the road by myself.

JOURNALIST	49. Ok. And why are you taking this [Bible Study] class?
JOHN	50. Why am I taking this class? [In order] to get closer to God. It's a program that I feel that I need to be in, to help me build up spiritually.
JOURNALIST	51. You don't need to be in it right? You can choose to be in it or not.
JOHN	52. Yeah. I chose to be in this program.
JOURNALIST	53. And...I was at one class now. Are the discussions always like this...or...?
JOHN	54. Well this is only my second class ...but, basically it's different topics on the scriptures and we will break off into little groups. The subjects we talk about may get off topic but it's always about something surrounding God.
JOURNALIST	55. And why is that important?
JOHN	56. God is important. It helps you... I can't quite explain why it's important but it's an important thing.
JOURNALIST	57. Ok. And do you discuss this afterwards with people as well or just there [in the class]?
JOHN	58. Yes. I always discuss with the person you just interviewed before me [ANTHONY]...yeah, if I have little questions, I'll come to him. I grew close to him since I've been in here. And like I said I'm not a people person so I don't really talk to people like that. He's somebody I can relate to.
JOURNALIST	59. So...what do think is going to happen in a couple of years. I mean ideally what would your life look like?
JOHN	60. Well obviously in a couple of years I will still be in here...
JOURNALIST	61. Well ok...when you get out let's say.
JOHN	62. I don't know. I know what I would like to happen. I just want to be happy.
JOURNALIST	63. And how would you do that?
JOHN	64. Living a peaceful life—just full of faith. You know, just always believing that everything is going to be all right.
JOURNALIST	65. And can you just tell me a little bit about how you got into what you did? You know, [what made you] actually commit a crime?
JOHN	66. Just... it all boiled down to me being depressed [that] caused me to do the things I do—I did. My surroundings and being caught up in [them]. I was just lost. I was weak-minded. I was almost on the edge of suicide.
JOURNALIST	67. How old were you?
JOHN	68. I was only 19. I'm 24 now.

JOURNALIST	69. Do you think a lot of kids are like that?
JOHN	70. Yeah. Yes a lot of kids [are] like that.
JOURNALIST	71. Ok. I'm going to ask you the same question. Why did you end up here?
ALEX	72. I ended up here because uh... they tried to convict me of attempted murder. But they downgraded it to a second degree aggravated assault / robbery.
JOURNALIST	73. To someone who hasn't been in the prison system, what does that mean, what did you do?
ALEX	74. Uh.. I stabbed somebody, aggravated assault. Thank God that he did not die.
JOURNALIST	75. And how old were you when that happened?
ALEX	76. I was 17. It happened in Atlantic City. It happened when I was at the age of 17. But now I'm 20. I turn 21 next year.
JOURNALIST	77. And why are you taking this class?
ALEX	78. Um, At first I took it...to keep it real, like, I just wanted to be around the brothers. I just wanna mature my mind more in the faith that God has called me to live today. And I learned a lot of things about how the spirit is, and how your body is and how your soul is, like I didn't know before. Like, I lacked knowledge of that. But now I can really look into my soul and spirit and really elaborate on what it's about. And I use that, and help me to uh, to uh... How should I say this? Uhh....just to discover my spirit and my soul and to know what is the purpose of it. And now I'm a TA (teaching assistant) and willing to help others from my own experience. You know how they say that experience is the best teacher? So, like, somebody can know, like "if he can do it, I can do it too". I can set an example just like Jesus set us an example of the way to follow him.
JOURNALIST	79. When you say "help others," what does that entail?
ALEX	80. Well "help others" in other words encourage them—especially in places like this. Uh, we need a lot of encouragement. "Pleasant words are help to the bones." And bring health to your body. Even a smile could be an action...
JOURNALIST	81. Because it is like dreary ... to be locked up...?
ALEX	82. Yeah, yeah you can say that. A lot of people stress, especially around these times—now that the holidays are coming through. And uh, sometimes what you gotta do is allow God's spirit to dwell with your spirit and touch others' spirits too so that they can know that vibe, that spirit, that uh...how should I say that uh just, that power that God gives us for the brothers as a body of Christ...
JOURNALIST	83. ... Tell me a little bit of what um...what you see other people going through here.

	Is it loneliness? Is it aggression? What is it?
ALEX	84. Uhh.. Sometimes I see a lot of peer pressure...Like, there's a lot of obstacles in this place. Sometimes that imprisons you. I mean, you can't... uh...how should I say this... uh... show your talents... I mean... [in this place you only] want to show people what they expect from you...you know... and that kind of hinders...the other talents that God has given us for other people to know--
JOURNALIST	85. What would you have to do, for example, to show others, to be yourself and not what others think of you?
ALEX	86. Umm. Use your ideas. Be classic, original. Don't try to be like others. I mean, instead of somebody saying something, and we don't agree with it [silently]...just say what your mind says about it. And people will respect you for it. Even though they don't agree with it. I guess people will respect you for it—just for being real.
JOURNALIST	87. I thank you [ALEX]. And I have to ask you the same thing [PAUL].
PAUL	88. Alright. I was convicted in 2000 of plenty of charges but uh, the major ones kidnapping, assault, robbery.
JOURNALIST	89. Kidnapping, like somebody else or...?
PAUL	90. Yeah...another person. Just moving them from one location to the next.
JOURNALIST	91. In order to do what?
PAUL	92. To rob, and assault and...a lot of things.
JOURNALIST	93. And you were how old then?
PAUL	94. I was at that time 18. Now I am 25, next week. So, I've been down [in prison] now for six, going on seven years.
JOURNALIST	95. Whoa.
PAUL	96. Yeah.
JOURNALIST	97. And... you took the [Logos bible] class already...
PAUL	98. Yes.
JOURNALIST	99. Tell me a bit about it...how it... I don't know, what it did, or didn't do, or whatever.
PAUL	100. I actually had to go through the class twice. Because at the beginning I was not, you know, ready for it. It's an intense class. The second time I came around I was ready... my heart was in it and I was ready for the class. And I just got out of the class everything that I could. I just, you know, drained it. And it's really been a complete blessing to me. And that's why I come back as a TA (teaching assistant). Because I like helping the brothers you know, I'm a clerk here so, automatically the brothers come to me for help, like,

	to get them on certain services and you know. I'm here for helping the brothers you know. That's why I do the TA thing, and...so on.
JOURNALIST	101. "Helping?"...I don't know what that means. Does that refer to like helping them to take drugs or what? I have no idea...
PAUL	102. No. Helping, meaning like: any spiritual questions they need I can help them get answered. If I can't help, then I can go to Rev. Atkins [Chaplain at the prison] who will help me. Uh, just, you know (YK), listen to what they have to say, YK. If I see a brother down, you know a lot of brothers walk around here feeling down. Like Rev. Atkins said earlier, you can actually tell when a brother's depressed. So when I see that, I kind of try to talk to him—even if it's not on a spiritual level, I try to talk to him and get him out of that zone.
JOURNALIST	103. Give me one example of where you did that lately.
PAUL	104. Alright. Lately? There was a brother on the tier (housing unit tier) recently. His baby's mother hasn't been coming around. You know, she was coming and then she just stopped. So I was seeing him and he was like kind of quiet and you know, distant from everyone else. So I went over there and I tried to talk to him. And at first he didn't want to talk about it but then he started speaking about it. And I told him that, you know, she comes and she goes. He doesn't have too much time [left in his sentence], so she'll be back. "You know, it's just a phase you gotta go through." And after I told him this, he's involved in the class and everything now.
JOURNALIST	105. Oh really?
PAUL	106. Yes he's in the class.
JOURNALIST	107. When you said the first time you weren't ready, what does that mean?
PAUL	108. Spiritually, mentally...the four chambers [of self that are addressed in the Logos Bible Study] I wasn't ready [chuckle]. My mind was still dealing with the fact that...alright...because when I first dropped [a request slip] for it I was just recently [arrived] in the building. I probably had a few months in the building. So I was like—I heard about it from a brother who was a clerk here. And he told me about it, so I was like, let me check it out. And I went and I wasn't really how can I say it, at that time I wasn't really ready. I wasn't in no shape or form or way. I wasn't. It's a real intense class. And If you really wanna get the right things out of it, you have to be mentally ready for this program. You have to be. Because if not you're just wasting time.
JOURNALIST	109. So how did it switch? How did you get that [change]?
PAUL	110. I started growing-- I started coming back to church more often. I was coming on

	every Sunday, taking a bible study, getting with the brothers. And like they say “iron sharpens iron” so I just started building myself up. And when the time came I was ready for it. I was ready for it the second time around. Actually I missed one [session], then I missed the second one and the third one [onward] I was there for.
JOURNALIST	111. OK. Do you have any sort of recommendations, should anything be changed, added, whatever?
PAUL	112. I love the way it’s going now. It’s really a blessing. This is the largest group ever, that I’ve seen.
JOURNALIST	113. And how did that come about?
PAUL	114. It’s a lot of word-of-mouth. A lot of word of mouth. I see a lot of the brothers are more enthusiastic now that we got Rev. Atkins here with us full time so it’s like, the brothers are like really getting into the word, getting into the message that God is really trying to reach them. And I think that’s what’s really drawing [more brothers]—I think that’s God [at work].
JOURNALIST	115. Does that also mean that you think about getting out or is it basically just dealing with [life] in here [in prison]?
PAUL	116. The program—it’s a re-entry program but I take everything I can from it now. Like, an example of this would be—I have many examples but uh...I was not good at setting goals, like I never new how to set a goal. I say I going to do something and I never do it. And part of this program is to set a year-long goal at the end. So I set this goal and I actually worked the steps and completed it. Well, I’m still in the process you know, that’s why I’m still in the class, because it’s still a long process, but, I actually learned now how to keep goals and keep my word at something. If I say I’m going to do it then I’m going to do it.
JOURNALIST	117. Give me an example of where you did that.
PAUL	118. All right, uh. The working out. I lost a lot of weight after I started doing this. I started working out. I started really getting my body ready for God, like physically. And I’ve lost over 30 pounds. I’m constantly working out. I work out every day. You know, I eat right, I keep in shape because it really helps me, you know, like they say: “a healthy body, a healthy mind, a healthy soul.” So that’s really one of the big things.
JOURNALIST	119. One question I have to, I guess anybody, is this [class] something you would do at home?
ANTHONY	120. For me persnally, I think I would say, No. Because a course like this requires

	<p>commitment. You know, you gotta commit to the end of it. And being in here [there are] not nearly as many as distractions as there are on the outside. There are plenty of distractions [on the outside], a lot of temptations. You know you have so many things to pick and choose from. In here you ain't got many options. People are always telling you what to do, you know what I mean? So, [the class] is real easy, [because] you can focus on it. You can actually look forward to it every week. So I would have to say, if I were on the streets I don't think I would be in a program like this.</p>
JOURNALIST	<p>121. What would be different on the streets? What do you experience there?</p>
ANTHONY	<p>122. Well, for one, everything moves a lot faster on the streets. In here, you actually have a chance to sit back and reflect on what's really going on around you and within yourself. You know, on the streets you don't really worry about that, you just running and going like, on autopilot. YK. You don't take the chance and think about and reflect on what's going on. As opposed to in here: you got ample time to do that. YK. So when you really sit back and analyze what's going on within yourself and outside of yourself, you look in the mirror and you see what's wrong with you. And you realize what you are missing and what you are needing. YK. You start searching for those things –whether it be spiritual, physical, anything. For this course specifically I would have to say spiritual. You start searching for God and what He's calling you to do; YK, trying to find that purpose. Without purpose life is meaningless. You need purpose. You need to find out, strive to find out what you are here for. YK and I feel, this course (and other programs like it) is the best way to do so—the best way to find out.</p>
JOURNALIST	<p>123. And that purpose you didn't have before?</p>
ANTHONY	<p>124. Exactly. Or you didn't know about it before. YK. I believe you always had the purpose, you just never knew about it because you were so busy indulging in whatever you wanted to indulge in—your self. YK. So, I would say that's why I don't I would have taken this program on the streets.</p>
JOURNALIST	<p>125. How did hear about this program?</p>
ANTHONY	<p>126. Well I'm open and drinking everything. I wanna know what's going on about anything within church having to do with learning more about God or gaining a closer relationship with God. Anything. I wanna know what's going on and I wanna join it, I wanna be a part of it...That's how I heard about that...</p>
JOURNALIST	<p>127. One other question I have. I mean I come here for one evening and of course it looks very nice, your prison does. You all are sort of, YK talking to each other discussing</p>

	important things and so on. How is this different from let's say what I haven't seen during the day? ...Or is it not, I don't know.
JOHN	128. It's the people that are down here right now. You are not seeing [in here] the types of people who are in jail that you hear about on the streets. Here are mostly positive people trying to make a change in their lives. The majority of people in this jail are knuckleheads so to speak. They have no purpose. So that's the major difference you see down here [in this Bible class].
JOURNALIST	129. Anybody else, want to answer?
ALEX	130. Yeah, um like: Jail is a place you don't want to be. [chuckle] Like, it's totally just, chaos. I mean like, especially how the COs (Correction Officers) treat you. If you don't like people telling you what to do, don't come to jail. YKWIS (You know what I'm saying)? But as for me, I think that God has appointed [for] here certain people. For His chosen, instead of dying He has given us a second chance to let us realize [how much grace we have]... Like now, sometimes the water comes out [of faucets] brown and there certain rules we have to follow like for example if one person gets into a fight, everybody [all other inmates] gets locked down (locked in their cells) even during a heat wave. You don't want to come to jail. [In the face of all of that] I thank God that He has given me the peace of mind and the perseverance and his grace for me [while] in this jail because without it I would have gone crazy. [You can go crazy] especially if you have bunkies (roommates) [who are crazy] and the way they run the jail is like totally crazy.
JOURNALIST	131. Explain that.
ALEX	132. Sometimes they give you certain [inconsistent] rules: if the CO does not like the tier (a certain wing of inmates), he will probably tell you that you can't come into the day room (a common area on the inmate tier) with your boots on, probably because they had the floor waxed [with no apparent schedule]. They will make so many excuses [for inconveniences] that it will irritate you. And like let's say you got towels on top of the table, they'll say "you got to take that off" or "you can't bring bags in your room" but that's the bag you put your bread in, now, [consequently] you don't have any food. Or [they may say] "you know what, we are going to cancel visits for [a certain person or for a certain reason] if you all don't get your act together then we are just going to cut your visits short. And like, in other prisons they get visits on Saturday and Sunday but here we are only allowed to have visits once a week. YKWIS? And the phones and the visits and the mail and everything YKWIM? Jail is just a place you don't want to be, you get strip searched and

	<p>everything. But thanks [be] to God, He gives us the grace! And this is a place for us to practice the faith. He shows us the things in [our] hearts that He doesn't want you to have. And He shows you how to trust in Him and how to help others. Jail could be a blessing and it could be a place of torture. It could be hell. In other words, you asked him (to ANTHONY) a question about how he was doing out there and in here. Well in the book of John it says that God brings you to him. In the Greek [of the New Testament] [the verb] to bring or brought means [to come] kicking and screaming. Sometimes that's what God does to us →</p>
ALEX (Cont'd)	<p>133. According to the Bible it says that the devil "has blinded you". In other words, you are filled with...desires. You want to have pleasures. You want to have sex with women and smoke and just, all these things that destroy your life and you are not able to see what's going on. And God brings you to His light, according to His mercy, His grace. And He helps you to see the things that you didn't see so you could bring that grace to help others. So, don't come to jail. In reality, if you had a chance to go to church, go to church. And ask God for wisdom. Ask God for understanding. Ask God for the knowledge. "Ask, seek and knock": that's one of the things that God wants us to do. Ask, ask and pray. Ask for God's guidance. If you are having problems don't be scared to tell other people, because the worst thing that can happen is keeping it to yourself and not telling others because others might have a different perspective and they may have the answer to help you.</p>
JOURNALIST	<p>134. Is there anything else that I should ask you that I haven't asked? Anything that the listeners should know?</p>
PAUL	<p>135. Yeah I got something. Obviously, this class, and this chapel and the brothers here definitely do not represent "what people think" is going on in the jail system. You know there are people here who are trying to prepare themselves for a better life and will not be repeat offenders and will not come back. YK? These are the brothers that really are taking the time to come down here [to the chapel and also] to do college courses—preparing themselves so that when they get out there they have a foundation they can step on. YK? And I just want the people to know that everybody in jail is not the "criminal, convict, hardened criminal who is always coming back." No. You got people here who have committed one wrong in their life and are actually trying to move on.</p>
JOURNALIST	<p>136. Thank you very much. Thank you!</p>

Questionnaire for People who were interviewed about their participation in the Logos Bible Study while incarcerated in 2007

1. In general, how did you feel about your interview with World Vision Report when it had happened? How do you feel about it now?
2. In your interview, you described why it was important for you to participate in the Logos Bible Study. Today, do you think the Bible study was important for the same reasons?
3. If you currently would modify or add to these reasons why you participated in the Logos Bible Study in 2007, can you please describe those modified or additional reasons here?
4. During your participation in Logos Bible Study, how many hours per week did you study the Bible? How many hours per week do you study your Bible now?
5. Do you believe that participating in the Logos Bible Study has influenced your overall behavior and attitudes during your incarceration? If so, how?
6. Has your practice of Bible study with the Logos program helped you to handle prison life with more courage, confidence and direction? If so, how?
7. What about the Logos Bible Study helped you to gain and maintain a healthy body, mind, soul and spirit?
8. Do those lessons from the Logos program on finding in the Bible inspiration for gaining and maintain complete health still help you today?
9. What is your definition of gaining a spiritual restoration of your relationship with God?
10. Has your participation in Bible study increased your level of spiritual restoration? If so, how?

11. Has your participation in the Logos Bible study helped to increase your interest in educational programs? If so, how?
12. Has your participation in Logos Bible study helped to increase your interest in enrichment programs that are offered in prison (e.g., Focus on the Victim, Alternatives to Violence Project, Alcoholics/Narcotics Anonymous, etc.)? If so, how?
13. Do you believe that the Bible Study has helped prepare you to become a responsible citizen in society? If so, how?
14. In what ways, if any, did the Logos Bible Study help you to prepare for life after you return to society?

Please mail responses (with SIGNED CONSENT FORM) To:

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The Logos Bible Study in Prison

INTRODUCTION

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only...he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”
--James 1:22a, 25

In the above quote, James is encouraging those who read spiritual principles not only to learn about them but to live them. In the original Greek the word for “word” in this text, is “Logos,” an expression that can also refer to a “wisdom saying” or an “idea”. A person’s worth can be measured by the ideas or notions of wisdom s/he brings into being. Scriptures such as this empower volunteer organizations like the **Jericho Discipleship Volunteers of the Saints Prison Ministry** to go into prisons—places holding many people seeking self-worth and wisdom—and offer God’s Word and an opportunity for gaining self-enrichment and an empowered life that is based on values that go beyond self.

The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) has increased its interest in aftercare initiatives in order to help decrease the state’s high recidivism rate. **Consequently, the NJDOC’s Office of Chaplaincy is currently working to collaborate with faith-based organizations on the development of a statewide “Chaplaincy Network” program.** This endeavor has two goals: (a) finding and preparing inmates who are ready to be in mentoring relationships before release; and (b) training faith-based communities for restorative and empowering relationships with the inmates after release. In this collaboration, **the Saints Prison Ministry** is not only helping the NJDOC to find and train mentors for ex-offenders but their Jericho Discipleship volunteers are also helping administer the educational curriculum that would prepare those inmates who are selected for the mentorship program. This educational curriculum is called the **Logos Seminar on Holistic Health and Life Direction.**

In the criminal justice community of New Jersey the Logos Seminar is new and unique because it teaches methods of translating Biblical principles into practical methods of gaining and maintaining a healthy body, mind, soul and spirit. In dealing with these four dimensions of self, we address issues such as: overcoming internal and external violence, parenting, self-esteem, addictions (chemical and relational), vocation discernment, and purpose-driven goal setting and other challenges that must be addressed if one is to obtain holistic health.

The following is an explanation of style, structure, materials and content of the Logos Seminar.

CLASS STYLE

The teaching style to be used by this program is similar to the “problem-posing” method. In this method the student is not seen simply as an empty vessel to be filled by the instructor. Rather, the student is seen as a vessel being filled by God’s Holy Spirit and the instructor is used by God to help facilitate that process. The Holy Spirit is the teacher, not the instructor. The instructor, called the facilitator, is an enabler of the students in their attempt to discern God’s guidance and teaching. Instead of “problem-solving” the facilitator will use “problem-posing” where the students will be guided in having their voices heard in defining the issues that challenge them. It is assumed in this style of teaching that God’s Spirit actively seeks to reveal truths through the students themselves and the more cognizant and comfortable the students are with that, the stronger disciples they will become.

The problem-posing method is one of the best ways to express this curriculum’s understanding of *metanoia* or repentance. This curriculum follows the Biblical teaching that Godly repentance is deeper than worldly regret in that it helps a person to discern the causes of her mistakes and enables her to overcome those causes (I Corinthians 7:9, 10). Consequently, the disciple of Jesus is given the opportunity to express her thoughts on the particular and general causes, effects and situations that have caused the challenges in her life. Through facilitation by the instructor, the student will be challenged to discern his own thoughts and feelings on various personal and societal issues and to recognize God’s revelations on them.

For each class period the instructor must keep in mind the goal of bringing out the students’ human understanding of the issues and then reveal God’s view of those issues through scripture. Once God’s view is acknowledged, each student is challenged to use the revelation to create methods for the application of Scriptural truths to the idiosyncrasies of his or her own life. It is hoped that by the end of the course each student will: (a) create a method for applying Scripture to his or her own particular life; and (b) establish a personal plan and timeline for the development of a healthy body, mind, soul, and spirit.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Ideally, the course will have 15 to 20 students and 4 facilitators. Each session should have one Head Facilitator (HF) and at least one Assistant Facilitator (AF). Each of the four instructors will take the role of Head Facilitator for three sessions. Each instructor should fulfill the role of Assistant Facilitator for three sessions. The entire course moves in two phases and covers a total span of 24 weeks.

Each class period will meet for 90 minutes once a week for 24 sessions and proceed in the following order:

The Large Group Lecture (20 mins)— the Head Facilitator leads opening prayer and reads the scriptures of the day. S/he then presents the topics, Cultural objects and readings to be considered by the class. The HF will use the “problem-posing” method to bring out the students’ understandings of the different issues and lead them in consideration of God’s revelations on the topics.

The Small Group Face-to-Face (40 mins)— the students will be split into groups of five, where they are invited to share their own personal perspectives on the issues being discussed.

The Large Group Cultural Engagement (30 mins)—the facilitator leads the students in engaging the cultural object presented at the beginning of class using the revelations and methods of discernment learned during the class.

Spirit-Work Toward the Next Session—this is the assignment of readings in the Bible and any other readings that offer opportunities for the development of spiritual perspectives on the events and products of contemporary culture. The students will be challenged to discuss the readings amongst themselves in preparation for the next class period. They will also be given a list of questions which they should answer before the next session.

Closing Prayer—The session is ended by one of the students leading the closing prayer.

Phase One: The Dimensions of the Self

During the first 14 weeks the class will cover **the dimensions of the human being and consider the human and divine perspectives on achieving and maintaining a healthy state of being:**

The first session will address the human and divine values. This will be a review of what values human society holds and how they compare to God’s values (Proverbs 14:12). This review shall be brief because it is expected that the student in the discipleship class has already come *to acknowledge the sinful state of humanity before God*. The first session will also consider the role of dependency in our lives and how we are ultimately dependent on God (Acts 17:16-28). It is expected that the student will have already come *to acknowledge his/her dependence on God and emptiness without God*.

During sessions 2 to 14 the human being will be covered. These will teach that in order for someone to be a healthy human being, one must submit the **body and mind** to God’s enlightenment process and increase one’s intimacy with God through the development of a healthy **soul and spirit** (Genesis 2:7; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Sessions 2 to 7 will guide the students toward centering the concepts of a healthy body and mind within God's Word and submitting body and mind to God's process of illumination. The mind/body issues to be discussed will include: self-esteem, substance addiction, occupation discernment, as well as healthy mental and physical nourishment.

Sessions 9 to 14 will guide students toward increased intimacy with God through the discussion of methods to use God's Word in the enrichment of the soul and spirit. The spirit/soul issues to be discussed will include: spiritual communion and discipline; vocation discernment; overcoming inwardly and outwardly expressed violence; inspirational artistic expression; building good relationships; and parenting.

After the sessions there will be review, examination and evaluation. The examination will be based on the student's grasp of the information and models presented for healthy living and his/her own personal plan for Scripture application and life amelioration. The student will also be given the opportunity to evaluate the class.

Phase Two: The Direction of the Self

During this phase each class will meet once a week for 10 sessions. The focus of phase two is to teach methods of distinguishing between self-centered and purpose-centered goal setting. In this phase, students learn how to set spiritually grounded objectives for the different dimensions of self.

The first session will address God-centered goal setting. In this session, students will consider the important concept of creating future goals that develop the different dimensions of self over time. In this class, such goals are considered God-centered because they call the person to a physically and spiritually balanced life-style. These goals cannot be achieved without strong faith and a sense of purpose.

In sessions two to nine, students will engage in discussions and exercises that push the student to acquire techniques of positive goal-setting habits for the body, mind, soul and spirit. Based on their knowledge of the different dimensions of self, the students determine what their needs are in the each of these dimensions and make a plan for achieving those needs.

In Session 10 the students review the course and start their final project of creating a comprehensive one-year plan for self-improvement and empowerment. This project is due two weeks after the last scheduled class.

CLASS MATERIALS

- The New King James Version of the Bible
- Various assigned readings from contemporary culture that address the discernment and development of a healthy body, mind, soul and spirit.
- The Logos curriculum stock of artistic songs, videos and visual artwork.
CD and Video Cassette Players.
- Notepads, writing utensils, and folders.

LOGOS SEMINAR'S PERSPECTIVE ON:

THE DIMENSIONS OF THE HUMAN BEING: BODY, MIND, SOUL, AND SPIRIT

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ..”

-1 Thessalonians 5:23

THE BODY:

*This is the physical part of human being. The perishable bones, blood and tissues, which form the dwelling place for the human mind and spirit. **THE BODY IS NOURISHED BY FOOD AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS MATERIALLY SECURE AND SUPPORTIVE FOR GROWTH.***

I Corinthians 6:13, 20 “Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the **body** is...for the Lord and the Lord for the **body**...for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your **body** and in your spirit which are God's.”

THE MIND:

*This includes the collective conscious and subconscious processes in a human being that direct and influence understanding and physical behavior. **THE MIND IS NOURISHED BY LEARNING AND MEDITATING UPON IDEAS AS WELL AS MENTAL EXERCISES LIKE READING, LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION, MATHEMATICS, ETC.***

Romans 8:5 “For those who live according to the flesh **set their minds** on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit, the things of the spirit.” - Romans 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your **mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

THE SOUL:

*This is the animating aspect of humans that is credited with the faculties of emotion, awareness and willpower. It is the immaterial aspect of a human that defines a person's individualism and ability to be in relationship with others and is influenced by the information received from the body, mind and spirit. **THE SOUL IS NOURISHED BY FELLOWSHIP, POSITIVE COMMUNICATION (including prayer), POSITIVE SOCIAL AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.***

Psalms 143:6 “I spread out my hands to You: My **soul** longs for You like a thirsty land.” - Acts 4:32 “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one **soul**; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”

THE SPIRIT:

*The immortal, animating force within living beings. It represents a human's “inner being” or essential nature that departs from the body at death. **THE SPIRIT IS NOURISHED BY: FAITH; PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE; FINDING AND PRACTICING A PURPOSE-DRIVEN LIFESTYLE; SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES LIKE THE STUDY OF HOLY SCRIPTURES AND CONTEMPLATION OF THE DIVINE.***

Psalms 51:10 “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast **spirit** within me.” - I Corinthians 2:11, 12 “For what man knows the things of man except the **spirit** of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the **spirit** of God. Now we have received not the **spirit** of the world but the **spirit** who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.” - II Corinthians 4:16 “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward nature is perishing, yet the **inner nature** is being renewed day by day.”

THE LOGOS SEMINAR

ON HOLISTIC HEALTH AND LIFE DIRECTION

PHASE ONE

SESSION 1: A DISCUSSION ON HUMAN AND DIVINE VALUES

A. Large Group Lecture.

- Head Facilitator (HF) leads opening prayer then reads **Proverbs 14:12, Luke 12.15-21, and Acts 17:16-34.**
- HF gives personal testimony of walk with God in Christ: Talks about how s/he saw the positive and negative characteristics of self without God's input and how the relationship with God has enhanced the facilitator's view of self. HF mentions how God's word will always be a stone upon which to break the self.
- HF explains the problem-posing method⁵³⁸ of teaching by stating that the purpose of the class is not to provide solutions but to equip the students to recognize the solutions provided by God. This is done by in-depth study of the problems within self and within the world through spiritual and human lenses.
- HF leads discussion on the questions: "What are your values? What are God's Values?" The HF shares examples of his/her own personal values held and compares and contrasts them with God's.
- Human values give an indication of human dependency. What do all humans reach out for? What does God offer in response to the human search? What is repentance and how can it help the human search?

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- HF divides the room into small groups of 5. Within the small groups each person should share a personal value and need that they have confessed through their words and/or actions.
- Each person should share an inner challenge that they have been unable to overcome alone.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF uses an object from popular culture as the target object around which to center further discussion of values—God's vs. the world's.
- HF ensures that discussion touches on: the need for humans to discern those values that the world puts upon them; the need for humans to discern their values from God's; the human need for repentance; the state of humanity in God's sight (sin).

D. Spirit-Work Toward the Next Session.

- HF introduces the New King James Version of the Bible to be used in the class. Scriptures to consider: **1 Corinthians 6:13-20.**

⁵³⁸ See above discussion on "class style."

SESSIONS 2 TO 14: SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE HUMAN BEING

SESSION 2: THE BODY (PART I)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- Head Facilitator opens class with prayer and reviews the definition used in this course for the Body: **This is the physical part of human being. The perishable bones, blood and tissues, which form the dwelling place for the human mind and spirit. THE BODY IS NOURISHED BY FOOD, PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS MATERIALLY SECURE AND SUPPORTIVE FOR GROWTH.**
- **HF leads class in consideration of the scripture 1 Corinthians 6:13-20.**
- HF leads a discussion on the following questions: What do you believe the body wants? What do you believe the body needs? For what purpose was the body created—according to society, according to scripture?

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Each person shares what they have considered doing in the past or for the future to improve their bodies' health.
- Each person shares what they think God can do with their bodies.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in discussing an item from contemporary culture with a focus on addictions and body health.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider Luke 12:22-34**
- **Closing prayer**

SESSION 3: THE BODY (PART II)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- Head Facilitator displays cultural object for consideration from the curriculum stock and leads opening prayer.
- **HF leads class in summarizing of the scripture Luke 12:22-34.**
- HF leads a discussion in the following discussion:
 - To what can the body be addicted?
 - According to the Luke text our bodies can become vessels of faith. How can we make our bodies into such vessels while surrounded by worldly anxieties that push us toward unhealthy physical addictions?

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Within small groups each person shares a technique that they learned dealing with a physical addiction, and their success or failure in applying the technique.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in using the cultural object of the session as the target around which to center discussion about how to develop personal techniques for preserving one's body within the Spirit of God and away from harmful physical addictions.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider ROMANS 8:1-17.**
- **Closing prayer.**

SESSION 4: THE MIND (PART I)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- Head Facilitator leads opening prayer and reads **ROMANS 8:1-17**.
- HF reviews the definition of mind used in this course: **The collective conscious and subconscious processes in a human being that direct and influence understanding and physical behavior. THE MIND IS NOURISHED BY LEARNING AND MEDITATING UPON IDEAS AS WELL AS MENTAL EXERCISES LIKE READING, LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION, MATHEMATICS, ETC.**
- HF leads an in-depth review of the Romans 8:1-17 with the following questions:
 - What does it mean to be “carnally-minded” (does this include mental/physical addictions)?
 - What does it mean to be “spiritually-minded”?
 - Does the fact that we are considered “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” give us reason to have good self-esteem? If so, how?
 - Historically, American society has put forth the belief that the mind guides the body. Romans 8 adds to this the idea that the mind itself can be guided. What has the power to guide the mind? Please explain.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Within small groups each person tries to share the difference s/he has noticed between an action s/he has done under the guidance of the mind (limited personal knowledge) and personal action inspired by the Holy Spirit (unlimited knowledge).

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in using the cultural object of the session as the target around which to center discussion about the importance of recognizing one’s mind as a tool of the human spirit and Holy Spirit.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider Romans chapter 12.**
- **Closing prayer.**

SESSION 5: THE MIND (PART II)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- Head Facilitator leads opening prayer.
- HF reads **ROMANS 12**.
- HF leads an in-depth review of the Romans 12 with the following questions:
 - What does it mean to be “conformed to the world?”
 - What is it that God has given to Christian believers that can renew their minds?
 - In Romans 12:4-8 believers are encouraged to discern their spiritual gifts. Please describe any connections you may see between the discernment of one’s spiritual gifts and one’s self-esteem.
 - Are the behaviors found in Romans 12:9-21 to be considered as: (a) the evidence of a renewed and healthy mind; (b) the methods of working toward a renewed and healthy mind; or (c) a combination of both? Please explain your answer.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Within small groups each person tries to share a testimony of a certain behavior that s/he has done or witnessed that indicates the presence of a renewed mind.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in using the cultural object of the session as the target around which to center discussion about different ways for the mind to be renewed as a healthy tool of the Spirit.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider Luke 4:16-22, Romans 15: 4-7.**
- **Closing Prayer.**

SESSION 6: THE MIND (PART III)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- Opening Prayer. HF reads **Luke 4:16-22, Romans 15: 4-7** and leads class in considering the following questions:
 - What did Jesus stand up to do in the synagogue on the Sabbath day?
 - What was the reaction of the people who witnessed Jesus reading and explaining the text? What is your reaction?
 - According to the Romans text, what are the reasons for which Scripture was written?
 - What do the Luke and Romans texts teach about the importance of reading?
 - By reading the book of Isaiah, Jesus presented his purpose and hope to the world. Based on the Luke and Romans texts, can you see the importance of learning to exercise your mind through reading and explaining Scripture? Why or why not?

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Each person should consider the questions: have you ever made a priority of reading regularly? Why or why not? Please comment on the following statement: "Reading Scripture is a mental exercise that can bring purpose and hope to my life."

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in using the cultural object as the target around which to center discussion about how reading certain things can bring healing thought processes and decisions to a person's life.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider PSALMS 42, 43.**
- **Closing Prayer.**

SESSION 7: THE SOUL (PART I)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- Head Facilitator leads opening prayer.
- HF reads the definition of soul that will be used in this course: **This is the animating aspect of humans that is credited with the faculties of emotion, awareness and willpower. It is the immaterial aspect of a human that defines a person's individualism and ability to be in relationship with others and is influenced by the information received from the body, mind and spirit. THE SOUL IS NOURISHED BY FELLOWSHIP, POSITIVE COMMUNICATION (including prayer), POSITIVE SOCIAL AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.**
- HF reads **PSALMS 42, 43**.
- HF discusses the Psalms with the following questions:
 - What emotions are expressed in both Psalms?
 - The soul is longing for what in this text? What is obstructing the soul from obtaining the relationship it seeks?
 - Often the world violates our integrity and violates our peace. This is happening to the person's soul of this text. What does he do in response to this oppressive situation?
 - Is prayer an effective tool for overcoming oppressive violence? Why or why not?
 - What is more important to the writer of these two Psalms: agreement with people or agreement with God? Would humans generally have healthier souls if we followed the writer's relationship priorities? Do relationships with other humans have any importance—why or why not?

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Within small groups each person tries to share a testimony of one personal method for overcoming violence that has worked and one method that has not worked.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in using the artistic object of the session as the target around which to center discussion about different ways emotions can be used for building or destroying relationships.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Psalms 71 and 103; Acts 17:26-29.**
- **Closing Prayer.**

SESSION 8: THE SOUL (PART II)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- Opening Prayer. HF reads **Psalm 71**.
- The writer of Psalm 71 is reaching out to whom?
- In what ways does the soul in this Psalm seek to reach out to God?
- In what ways does the soul in this Psalm seek to praise God?
- For how long does the author intend to seek God's comfort, strength and reassurance?
- HF reads **Psalm 103**.
- In Psalm 103:1-5, what does the author mean by stating; "Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me"? (Please remember our definition of soul while considering this question.)
- HF reads **Acts 17:26-29**.
- After reviewing Acts 17:26-29 please explain this statement: "Art is something that can reveal God but it cannot create God." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Each person should consider the question: have you ever tried to express to God how you were feeling through a creative art? Why or why not?

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in using the artistic object as the target around which to center discussion about different methods by which we may use artistic expression to seek a healthy soul and increased intimacy with God.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider ACTS 4:31-37.**
- **Closing Prayer.**

SESSION 9: THE SOUL (PART III)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- HF reads **ACTS 4:31-37**.
- HF leads an in-depth review of the text with the following questions:
 - What conditions were present to bring about the joining of souls in this text?
 - What are the characteristics of souls who have come together as presented in the text?
 - Does increased intimacy with God lead to increased capacity for healthy relationships? Why or why not?
 - Is there a connection between having a sharing attitude and being united with others under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? Please explain.
 - Please comment on the following statement: "Without God's Holy Spirit, oppressive violence can injure the soul and cause the emotions to create destructive attitudes. However, God's love can serve as a catalyst that transforms the negative influence of oppressive violence into energy that pushes the emotions to create constructive and restorative attitudes."
 - HF reads the following quotes: "[We should try to manage our feelings through the antidote of Godly praise.] When rejoicing has become the habit pattern of your life you are not a thermometer personality registering the temperature of your environment. You are rather a thermostat personality setting the temperature...Proverbs 17:22 says "A merry heart does good like medicine. But a broken spirit dries the bones." Do you agree with these statements? Why or why not?
 - How can having a healthy soul enhance our parenting skills? Should children be seen as souls in need of tools and skills for recognizing and building healthy relationships with others and with God? If so, what are some ways in which we can be prepared to teach these skills?

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Within small groups each person tries to share a testimony of one person, event or thing during his childhood that guided his emotions toward the creation of constructive and restorative attitudes.
- Each should then share a testimony of one negative event of his youth that injured his soul and pushed his emotions to self-destructive and generally hurtful attitudes toward others.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in considering the cultural object of the session as the target around which to center discussion about how a person who is emotionally healthy can create healthy relationships.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider Acts 18:1-11.**
- **Closing Prayer.**

SESSION 10: THE HUMAN SPIRIT (PART I)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- HF opens with prayer.
- HF reads the definition of spirit that will be used in this course: **The immortal, animating force within living beings. It represents a human's "inner being" or essential nature that departs from the body at death. THE SPIRIT IS NOURISHED BY: FAITH; PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE; FINDING AND PRACTICING A PURPOSE-DRIVEN LIFESTYLE; SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES LIKE THE STUDY OF HOLY SCRIPTURES AND CONTEMPLATION OF THE DIVINE.**
- HF reads **ACTS 18:1-11** (cf. 2 THESS. 3:10).
- HF starts dialogue on the scripture with the following:
 - Please comment on the following definitions for vocation and occupation used by this course: "An **occupation** may correspond simply to a job or means of making money in order to be self-sufficient and take care of one's physical needs. A **vocation** is a work which is produced by a relationship between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit. It may or may not provide living wages, but it will definitely provide spiritual nourishment and promote self-worth."
 - In ACTS 18:1-11, how are Paul's occupation and vocation described? According to the text, what purposes are fulfilled by the occupation the vocation?

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Within small groups each person tries to share: (a) what skills s/he would like to develop for a trade (from carpentry to counseling, etc.); and (b) what skills s/he would like to develop for a ministry.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in considering the cultural object of the session as the target around which to center discussion about: (1) some advantages and disadvantages to living life with both an occupation and a vocation; and (2) some advantages and disadvantages to having a vocation that offers enough wages to be considered as one's occupation.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider I CORINTHIANS 2:10-14; Luke 4:16, Luke 22:39-41, and Mark 10:1.**
- **Be ready to hand in for the next session a written statement explaining one vocation and a one occupation that you presently believe would be good for you.**
- **Closing Prayer.**

SESSION 11: THE HOLY SPIRIT (PART II)

A. Large Group Lecture.

- HF reads **I CORINTHIANS 2:10-14** and leads the discussion with the following:
 - In this scripture the importance of God's Spirit in communion with the human spirit is expressed. What are some benefits of this relationship suggested by the text?
- HF summarizes **Luke 4:16, Luke 22:39-41, and Mark 10:1**, with the following statement.
 - These scriptures Luke 4:16 and 22:39-41 as well as Mark 10:1 demonstrate that Jesus did three things by habit: he stood up to read in the synagogue "as was his custom"; he went out to the mountain to pray as was his custom"; and he taught the people "as was his custom".
 - Given all that we know know about ourselves, what are the benefits of trying to imitate Jesus' routines of reading God's Word, taking the time to pray, and sharing spiritual lessons with others through witnessing and worship? Are there any challenges to creating and practicing such habits? If so, what are these challenges?

B. Small Group Face-to-Face.

- Within small groups each person tries to share: (1) the habits they currently have for nourishing the spirit; and (2) some habits that they would like to develop.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement.

- HF leads group in using the cultural object of the session as the target around which to center discussion about the importance of nourishing the human spirit.

D. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider I Thessalonians 5:12-28.**
- **Closing Prayer.**

**SESSION 12:
REVIEW AND REFLECTION
ON SOUL AND BODY**

A. Large Group Lecture.

- A Facilitator leads opening prayer.
- A Facilitator reads **I Thessalonians 5:12-28**.
- All Facilitators use this text as a point around which to focus questions and moderate discussion of the sessions on “Soul” and “Body”. During this time of extended large group lecture, the facilitators will give any additional commentary they have about the coursework and material. In addition, the students can use this time to explore more fully with the facilitators any of the material that they have studied.

B. Spirit-Work Toward Next Session.

- **Consider Hebrews 4:11-16.**
- **Closing prayer.**

**SESSION 13:
REVIEW AND REFLECTION ON
SPIRIT AND MIND**

A. Large Group Lecture.

- A Facilitator leads opening prayer.
- A Facilitator reads **Hebrews 4:11-16**.
- All Facilitators use this text as a point around which to focus questions and moderate discussion of the sessions on “Spirit” and “Mind”. During this time of extended large group lecture, the facilitators will give any additional commentary they have about the coursework and material. In addition, the students can use this time to explore more fully with the facilitators any of the material that they have studied.

B. Large Spirit Work for Next Session.

- **Take home and complete the FINAL EXAMINATION FOR LOGOS – PHASE 1**
 - **Closing prayer.**
-

**SESSION 14:
FINAL EXAMINATION**

LOGOS BIBLE STUDY

PHASE TWO

SESSION 1

God-Centered Goal Setting: Objectives for the Self, Grounded in the Spirit

A. Large Group Lecture Considering God's Word

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **Philippians 3:12-16**.
- HF leads discussion on the following questions:
 - What is Paul's goal in this text?
 - The prize of the upward call of God in Christ.
 - What is the activity and the attitude that Paul uses in order to try and achieve his goal of "the prize of the upward call of God in Christ"?
 - Paul forgets the things which are behind and reaches forward to those things which are ahead. Paul does not see himself as being perfected. Yet, he doesn't see perfection as a prerequisite to reaching for Christ.
 - Does Paul have a healthy perspective of himself? Why or why not?
 - Yes. He knows that God has loved him enough to save him and therefore despite his imperfection, he boldly reaches for Christ's perfection.

B. Large Group Lecture Considering God-Centered Goal Setting

- HF explains that the "spirit-work" or preparation for each class will include: (a) required reading of the book Temple Maintenance by James Gills; and (b) completion of an exercise in personal goal setting.
- HF leads discussion on the following topics:
 - What is a goal?
 - The purpose toward which an endeavor is directed; an objective.
 - How is a goal achieved?
 - Through planned endeavors and activities.
- What is the difference between Spirit-centered and self-centered goal setting?
 - Spirit-centered goals are those which help us to discern Godly priorities.
 - Self-centered goals are those which help us to discern worldly priorities.

C. Small Group Face-to-Face

- What do the following statements mean: "A goal without a measurable action is just a dream;" "A vision without resources is just a hallucination."?
- What does it mean to "plan the work and work the plan"?
 - "Planning the work" is charting the course.
 - "Working the plan" is fighting to stay on course.

D. Spirit-Work

- Read Luke 11:33-36

SESSION 2

Building Up The Body

A. Large Group Lecture

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **Luke 11:33-36**.
- HF leads discussion on the following questions:
 - Would you agree with the statement that this scripture teaches us that the ability of our bodies to be agents of God's light on Earth depends on whether we have a perspective on life that is based in darkness or in light? Why or why not?
 - One's perspective, whether based on light or on darkness, can determine if the direction the body takes is toward life or toward death.
 - What is the difference between seeing physical maintenance from a God-centered perspective and a self-centered perspective?
 - Physical maintenance that is God-centered leads one to performance that gives God glory. The self-centered perspective leads one to performance that gives short-sighted personal glory.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face

- Please share your "**F.I.T. (fitness, intensity, time)**" needs assessment, resource assessment, goals and activities from your Goals Worksheet. NOTE: Please feel free to discern which of the reading's suggested activities are not applicable to prison life and be ready to suggest possible alternatives for people who are incarcerated.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement

- HF leads group in discussing an item from contemporary culture with a focus on body health.

D. Spirit-Work

- Read **Daniel 1:1-16**.

SESSION 3

Taking Care of the Temple

A. Large Group Lecture

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **Daniel 1:1-16**.
- HF leads discussion on the following questions:
 - What are Daniel's goals in this text?
 - To remain healthy and undefiled in God's sight.
 - What is the activity that Daniel uses to achieve his goal?
 - He chooses an alternate regimen to Nebuchadnezzar's food.
 - What gives Daniel the confidence to challenge the diet offered to him by King Nebuchadnezzar?
 - His faith in God.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face

- Each person shares his/her "nutrition" needs assessment, resource assessment and nutrition goals and activities for the week from Goals Worksheet. NOTE: Please feel free to discern which of the reading's suggested activities are not applicable to prison life and be ready to suggest possible alternatives for people who are incarcerated.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement

- HF leads group in discussing an item from contemporary culture with a focus on healthy diet.

D. Spirit-Work

- Read **Philippians 2:1-11**

SESSION 4

Mastering the Mind

A. Large Group Lecture

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **Philippians 2:1-11**.
- HF leads discussion on the following questions:
 - What are some of the characteristic attitudes that Paul lists for those who have the mind of Christ?
 - These people have a mind that is focused on humility; the interests of others as well as self; lacking selfish ambitions.
 - These people should be receiving and giving: the comfort of love, the fellowship of the Spirit, affection and mercy.
 - The HF should refer to the diagram of the “Four Dimensions of Self” used by this.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face

- Each person shares his/her “**attitude**” needs assessment, resource assessment and attitude goals and activities for the week from Goals Worksheet.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement

- HF leads group in discussing an item from contemporary culture that addresses the topic of a healthy diet.

D. Spirit-Work

- Read **Philippians 4:2-9**.

SESSION 5

Thinking About Thoughts

A. Large Group Lecture

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **Philippians 4:2-9**.
- HF leads discussion on the following questions:
 - What does Paul say believers should focus their minds on?
 - Believers should focus their minds on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praise worthy.
 - These people should be receiving and giving: the comfort of love, the fellowship of the Spirit, affection and mercy.
 - According to Paul, what is the attitude and procedure through which believers ought to pray?
 - Believers ought to be anxious for nothing and have their prayer communications with God couched in thanksgiving.
 - Paul believes that you can become what you think all day long. Is it difficult in today's world to focus and reflect on positive things? Why or why not?
 - Yes. All conflict (whether personal, national or international) brings with it the potential for negative feedback. Also, much of the public media use negative ideas, attitudes and events to generate money.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face

- Each person shares his/her **“thought discernment”** needs assessment, resource assessment and attitude goals and activities for the week from Goals Worksheet.
- Everyone reflects on the question: how can I achieve the formula of Praise + Prayer = Peace?

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement

- HF leads group in discussing an item from contemporary culture that addresses the importance of monitoring and directing one's thoughts.

D. Spirit-Work

- Read **Colossians 3:1-14**.
- Read **The Spiritual Man** by Watchman Nee (copied handout) 491-493 “Rest.”

SESSION 6

Soul Searching

A. Large Group Lecture

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **Colossians 3:1-14**.
- HF leads discussion on the following questions:
 - What emotions or emotional expressions does Paul say believers should try to put away from their God-centered character?
 - Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language and falsehood.
 - According to Paul, what emotions are expressed by those who “set their minds on things above” and not on “things on the Earth (Col. 3:2)”?
 - Tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and love.
 - What are the emotional states in which believers should be?
 - The peace of God should rule in our hearts. And we should be thankful.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face

- Each person shares his/her “**emotional state of peace**” needs assessment, resource assessment and attitude goals and activities for the week from Goals Worksheet.
- Within small groups each person discusses his/her understanding of the reading from **The Spiritual Man** by Watchman Nee (copied handout) 491-493 “Rest.”

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement

- HF leads group in discussing an item from contemporary culture that demonstrates the search for inner peace.

D. Spirit-Work

- Read Colossians 3:15-17.
- Read **The Spiritual Man** by Watchman Nee (copied handout) 423-430, 434-435.

SESSION 7

Strengthening the Soul

A. Large Group Lecture

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **Colossians 3:15-17**.
- HF leads discussion on the following questions:
 - Please review Paul's statements about what emotions are expressed by those who "set their minds on things above" and not on "things on the Earth (Col. 3:2)"?
 - Tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and love.
 - Please review the emotional states in which believers should be.
 - The peace of God should rule in the hearts of believers. They should be in a state of thankfulness.
 - Should the presence of such emotional states and expressions in the soul of a believer lead to creative arts that teach the word of Christ? Why or why not?
 - In Col. 3:16-17, Paul encourages believers to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with hearts of grace. Paul expects those who have been "renewed in knowledge according to the image" of the One who created them (verse 10), to make all deeds and words in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face

- Each person shares his/her "**emotional expressive arts**" needs assessment, resource assessment and attitude goals and activities for the week from Goals Worksheet.
- Within small groups each person discusses his/her understanding of the reading from **The Spiritual Man** by Watchman Nee (copied handout) 423-430, 434-435.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement

- HF leads group in discussing an item from contemporary culture that demonstrates the practice of healthy, regular artistic expression.

D. Spirit-Work

- Read I Corinthians 2.
- Read **Temple Maintenance** (COPIED HANDOUT) pages 97-107

SESSION 8

Seeking the Spirit

A. Large Group Lecture

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **I Corinthians 2**
- HF leads discussion on the following questions:
 - According to Paul, what is the human spirit able to know?
 - The things and wisdom of man.
 - According to Paul, what is revealed to the human spirit that seeks to achieve communion with God's Holy Spirit?
 - The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. [I Cor. 2:9,10]
Faith that is by the power of God and not by human wisdom.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face

- Each person shares his/her **"spiritual practice of being in Communion with God"** needs assessment, resource assessment and attitude goals and activities for the week from Goals Worksheet.
- Within small groups each person discusses his understanding of the reading from **Temple Maintenance** pages 97-107.

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement

- HF leads group in discussing an item from contemporary culture that demonstrates the practice of regular communion with God.

D. Spirit-Work

- Read Luke chapter 4.
- Read **Temple Maintenance** (COPIED HANDOUT) pages 109-119.

SESSION 9

Strengthening the Spirit

A. Large Group Lecture

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **Luke chapter 4**.
- HF leads discussion on the following questions:
 - What are the three scriptures to which Jesus refers during his forty day fast and resistance to the temptations of Satan?
 - Deuteronomy 8:3; Deuteronomy 6:13; Deuteronomy 6:16.
 - What is the Scripture that Jesus reads aloud at the synagogue at Nazareth?
 - Isaiah 61:1, 2.
 - After being rejected in his hometown of Nazareth, how does he show the strength of his spirit in Capernaum?
 - By casting out spirits of unclean demons; healing the sick (including Peter's mother-in-law); he went to a deserted place; and went on to preach the kingdom of God in the synagogues of Galilee.
 - What activities does Jesus demonstrate that builds up the spirit?
 - Knowing and Reading the Word of God; Preaching the Word of God the word and deed.

B. Small Group Face-to-Face

- Each person works on his/her **"spiritual strengthening"** needs assessment, resource assessment and attitude goals and activities for the week from Goals Worksheet.
- Each person discusses his understanding of the reading from **Temple Maintenance** pages 109-119

C. Large Group Cultural Engagement

- HF leads group in discussing an item from contemporary culture that demonstrates people engaged in regular spiritual strengthening.

D. Spirit-Work

- Read I Thessalonians 5:12-28.

SESSION 10
Review: Being a Strong Servant

A. Large Group Face-to-Face

- Head Facilitator gives opening prayer and reads **I Thessalonians 5:12-28**.
- HF leads discussion about obtaining peace for ourselves through God-centered goal setting for the four dimensions of self.

B. Spirit-Work

- **Complete the Final Examination for Logos Phase 2: The One- Year Plan for Self-Development.**

THE LOGOS SEMINAR
ON HOLISTIC HEALTH
AND LIFE DIRECTION

PHASE TWO

LIFE DIRECTION
ACTION PLAN
WORKBOOK

NAME & ID: _____

DATE: _____

LOGOS SEMINAR

F.I.T.NESS* GOALS WORKSHEET

A) NEEDS ASSESSMENT (What I need to work on):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

B) GOALS (My goals as determined by my needs):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

C) RESOURCES (What I have to work with in order to achieve my goals):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D) ACTIONS (My planned activities for each goal):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

LOGOS SEMINAR

NUTRITION GOALS WORKSHEET

A) NEEDS ASSESSMENT (What I need to work on):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

B) GOALS (My goals as determined by my needs):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

C) RESOURCES (What I have to work with in order to achieve my goals):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D) ACTIONS (My planned activities for each goal):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

LOGOS SEMINAR

ATTITUDINAL GOALS WORKSHEET

A) NEEDS ASSESSMENT (What I need to work on):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

B) GOALS (My goals as determined by my needs):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

C) RESOURCES (What I have to work with in order to achieve my goals):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D) ACTIONS (My planned activities for each goal):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

LOGOS SEMINAR

THOUGHT DISCERNMENT GOALS WORKSHEET

A) NEEDS ASSESSMENT (What I need to work on):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

B) GOALS (My goals as determined by my needs):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

C) RESOURCES (What I have to work with in order to achieve my goals):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D) ACTIONS (My planned activities for each goal):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

LOGOS SEMINAR

EMOTIONAL STATE OF PEACE GOALS WORKSHEET

A) NEEDS ASSESSMENT (What I need to work on):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

B) GOALS (My goals as determined by my needs):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

C) RESOURCES (What I have to work with in order to achieve my goals):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D) ACTIONS (My planned activities for each goal):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

LOGOS SEMINAR

EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVE ARTS
GOALS WORKSHEET

A) NEEDS ASSESSMENT (What I need to work on):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

B) GOALS (My goals as determined by my needs):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

C) RESOURCES (What I have to work with in order to achieve my goals):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D) ACTIONS (My planned activities for each goal):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

LOGOS SEMINAR

PRACTICE OF BEING IN COMMUNION WITH GOD GOALS WORKSHEET

A) NEEDS ASSESSMENT (What I need to work on):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

B) GOALS (My goals as determined by my needs):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

C) RESOURCES (What I have to work with in order to achieve my goals):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D) ACTIONS (My planned activities for each goal):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

LOGOS SEMINAR

SPIRITUAL STRENGTHENING GOALS WORKSHEET

A) NEEDS ASSESSMENT (What I need to work on):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

B) GOALS (My goals as determined by my needs):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

C) RESOURCES (What I have to work with in order to achieve my goals):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D) ACTIONS (My planned activities for each goal):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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